

Approved  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**City of Fort Lauderdale**  
**Community Services Board**  
**700 NW 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue**  
**Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311**  
**April 20, 2026 – 4:00 P.M.**

<b>MEMBERS</b>		<b>PRESENT</b>	<b>ABSENT</b>
Christi Rice, Chair	P	21	4
Sharon Hughes, Vice Chair (dep. 5:59)	P	20	5
Mahalia Balfour	P	1	1
Tanya Cohn (via Zoom)	P	8	1
Wismy Cius	P	19	1
Tony Docal	P	3	2
Shelly Goren	P	12	0
Latrinsha Greaves	P	21	4
Gary Hensley	P	16	3

**Staff Present**

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager  
Olivette Carter, Assistant Housing and Community Development Manager  
Amanda Hatter, Housing and Community Development Planner  
J. Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of March 9, 2026, there are 8 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

The meeting was called to order at 4:09 p.m. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present.

**Motion** made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Mr. Cius, to allow Board Member Cohn to participate virtually. 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 – March 9, 2026**

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

### **IV. HOUSEKEEPING (Review Presentation Rules)**

Chair Rice briefly reviewed the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) presentation process, which allows each organization three minutes to present their requests. Following the presentations, the Board members will have seven minutes to ask questions about the applications.

Once all agencies have made their presentations, the Board members will discuss and rank the applications. As they have previously scored the applications during preliminary review, they will have the opportunity to adjust their scores if needed based on the presentations and questions. Once the discussion is finished, the members will submit their final scores and Staff will rank the organizations. The members will then discuss and determine funding amounts.

Ms. Williams reviewed the scoring rubric used by the Board for the applicant agencies, which includes the following categories:

- Benefit to low- to moderate-income individuals or target areas
- Program description and justification
- Cost-reasonableness of the project
- Clarification of how performance will be evaluated
- Cost benefit of the funding request
- Agency's experience, past performance, and management capacity
- Agency's financial stability and leveraging of funds

Ms. Williams noted that two sections of the applications will be scored by City Staff. These sections address the applicant's previous funding status, including whether or not they have previously been granted CDBG funding and whether or not they have been funded in the last three years.

Chair Rice stated that Vice Chair Hughes would abstain from voting on the CDBG applications, as she has a relationship with one of the applicant agencies.

### **V. CDBG PUBLIC SERVICES PRESENTATIONS**

#### **1. Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc.**

Rehana Sepersad, representing Broward Partnership for the Homeless, Inc., stated that this agency is the largest homeless service system in Broward County. They have assisted over 36,000 families with housing, shelter, health care, and supportive services.

Broward Partnership for the Homeless requests \$50,000 in CDBG funds to support its 230-bed shelter in Fort Lauderdale, at which individuals and families will receive 24-hour/seven-day care, access to meals, transportation, and critical stabilization. Its targets are as follows:

- 90% of enrollees will receive case plan goals
- 20% will achieve stable housing
- 75% will receive bus passes for transportation to work
- 40% will increase their overall income
- Target enrollment is 600 unduplicated clients within the span of one year

Broward Partnership for the Homeless has a budget of over \$800,000, including both public and private funds. They have a long-standing practice of providing services toward immediate relief as well as long-term housing. The organization has been funded by the CDBG program for the last three years.

Ms. Balfour requested more information on the status of clients who have achieved stable housing. Ms. Sepersad replied that there is a recidivism rate of roughly 24%. The demographic of participants has not changed; however, there are more providers within the community than in the past, which provides opportunities for collaboration. She felt the program is becoming more economically stable.

Mr. Hensley asked if the Partnership plans to increase their number of beds, and if any of the CDBG funding would be used toward that goal. Ms. Sepersad replied that the Partnership's facility is owned by Broward County, which means they cannot decide unilaterally to increase housing. They are working to secure additional affordable housing to support the existing facility. The requested funding would not be used toward expansion.

Mr. Cius asked for additional information on the recidivism rate. Ms. Sepersad explained that over the last five years, the organization has served 1,700 to 1,800 unduplicated clients per year with a recidivism rate of 22% to 24%. The recidivism rate is beyond the agency's control, as it can change due to factors including community dynamics, weather, and more. The Partnership works closely with Broward County to serve as many clients as possible.

Mr. Cius requested clarification of whether there is a follow-up process by which the agency can remain in contact with clients after they leave shelters. Ms. Sepersad replied that the stabilization process includes meeting with case managers, training for work, and saving money. Case managers seek to ensure the clients will move on to a stable and sustainable environment; however, some clients have additional concerns, including mental health and substance abuse issues, which make this more difficult to ensure.

Chair Rice asked for the number-one reason clients return to the Partnership, and requested that this information be included in the next report from that agency. Ms. Sepersad replied that many individuals leave shelters because they do not want to follow the processes there.

## **2. South Florida Institute on Aging**

Susie Vedrine, representing the South Florida Institute on Aging (SoFIA), explained that the organization has provided volunteer services for Broward County for 38 years. They are requesting \$50,000 in CDBG funds to support the Senior Companion Program. This would be their second year to receive funding.

The Senior Companion Program addresses social isolation in seniors. Many senior citizens in the Fort Lauderdale are homebound, live alone, or manage chronic conditions without consistent support. SoFIA volunteers provide both practical assistance and a human connection. Companions help reduce loneliness, improve emotional well-being, and support independence while offering relief to family and caregivers.

The \$50,000 grant would directly support program operations, volunteer training and coordination, and service delivery. The program helps to ensure that vulnerable older adults in Fort Lauderdale can continue to age with dignity, remain connected to their community, and experience a higher quality of life.

Ms. Vedrine advised that SoFIA serves approximately 600 individuals per year throughout Broward County. The Senior Companion Program allows volunteers to see up to five individuals in this program, either in-home, at an adult day care facility, or over the phone. Volunteers receive a stipend of \$4/day as well as a small allocation for travel.

Mr. Cius asked if the program has experienced any challenges in the previous year which would be addressed in the coming year. He also requested more information on how grant funds could be used to address new challenges. Ms. Vedrine explained that the organization maintains a waiting list of seniors who need assistance, and partner with other organizations which can provide volunteers to assist these individuals.

Ms. Vedrine continued that the majority of SoFIA's funding comes from AmeriCorps Seniors, which is a federal program. 2025 was challenging because funds were withheld from this organization early in the year, which caused a temporary closure of SoFIA. They applied for grant funds from local municipalities and community foundations.

Mr. Docal asked how often volunteers visit with senior participants, as well as the turnover rate among clients served. Ms. Vedrine replied that volunteers may visit clients between five and 40 hours per week, depending on the needs of the client. There is no

income eligibility requirement for clients, and the service is free of charge to anyone aged 55 or older.

### **3. Boys and Girls Club of Broward County**

Chris Gentile, representing Boys and Girls Club of Broward County, explained that this is a youth development organization serving roughly 18,000 children per year through clubs across the County. The organization has operated in the Broward community since 1965, serving young people between the ages of six to 18. Annual membership costs \$15/year; the true cost to members is approximately \$2,800.

The four pillars of Boys and Girls Club are:

- Academic success
- Character and leadership
- Health and well-being
- Life and workforce readiness

The organization requests \$50,000 to support the Nan Knox Club and Fred Deluca Teen Center in Fort Lauderdale. This club requires approximately \$850,000 each year in support. Boys and Girls Club of Broward County has a total annual budget of roughly \$20 million and serves 500 members at the Fort Lauderdale location. Roughly 75% of participants are enrolled in Title I schools, while another 70% live in single-parent households. 98% of participants graduate from high school and 88% enroll in college or other higher education. The \$50,000 would support general operations.

Chair Rice requested clarification of how children access these services. Mr. Gentile replied that the programs are open to any child, who can either walk to the centers or be transported there from school. There is no eligibility requirement. The program recruits participants at elementary, middle, and high schools.

Mr. Cius asked for information on Boys and Girls Club staff. Mr. Gentile replied that the organization has over 300 staff members, most of whom are alumni. The average tenure of staff is over 10 years. Staff is fully trained and provided with ongoing assistance, and both full- and part-time staff members are trained in lifesaving procedures.

Ms. Goren asked if the organization anticipates challenges due to funding cuts by the School Board. Mr. Gentile explained that the organization does not rely heavily on these funds. Less than 4% of the budget comes from state or federal sources.

Ms. Greaves requested additional clarification of the membership fee. Mr. Gentile replied that membership is \$15/year, with scholarships available to children who cannot afford this fee.

Ms. Greaves also asked how the Boys and Girls Club can reach students who are impacted by School Board funding cuts, as some schools are closing. Mr. Gentile stated that the organization identifies schools in a given area and transports students from schools to Boys and Girls Club facilities. They have 18 clubs throughout Broward County, three of which are in Fort Lauderdale. The organization continues to look for ways to partner with schools and/or open more clubs in areas that need them.

Chair Rice asked how the organization verifies that children served come from households with low to moderate incomes. Mr. Gentile advised that this is based on students' attendance at Title I schools; however, if financial information is not reported, they still seek to help each child.

#### **4. Jack & Jill Center**

Angella Schroller, representing Jack and Jill Children's Center, stated that this a two-generation organization serving both children and families. Their request is for \$50,000 to continue programming for children in Fort Lauderdale. While previous funding specifically provided scholarships, it was difficult for the organization to spend its allocation. They have developed greater flexibility and can now use CDBG funds toward behavior analysis and behavior therapy.

The requested funding would provide services intended to help children remain on track developmentally and enable parents to remain in the workforce. Ms. Schroller again emphasized the flexibility of the requested funds.

Chair Rice requested more detailed information on how the funds would be used. Ms. Schroller replied that the funds would be used toward therapeutic services for children. Kimmy Robinson, also representing Jack and Jill Children's Center, added that the organization works with six to eight therapists. 140 children are served by Jack and Jill's early education center.

Mr. Cius asked how the organization engages with the community to make families aware of the services they offer. Ms. Schroller replied that one area of focus is serving more families outside the walls of the center, citing an example of working with a community partner to help a family come to terms with a child's diagnosis and take steps toward closing developmental gaps.

Ms. Greaves requested more information on why only 13 children were served in Fort Lauderdale. Ms. Robinson explained that some children who could have benefited from programming were from outside Fort Lauderdale's ZIP codes.

Ms. Greaves also noted that Jack and Jill received \$1.5 million to upgrade their facility. Ms. Schroller advised that this was for the construction of a new elementary school. Ms. Greaves asked how funding from other grants or agencies were used. It was clarified that Fort Lauderdale's Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) helped fund the

building of the school. Most of the organization's funding goes toward overall office expenses and expenditures for the entire organization, not specifically to the Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for which CDBG funding would be used.

With regard to the number of children served the previous year, it was explained that Jack and Jill Children's Center had requested an extension, as their CDBG contract was specific to scholarship funding. Because they receive additional funding for scholarships through other programs, they were unable to fully draw down the CDBG funds. The contract was amended in order to serve children who needed behavioral services, and more than 80% of funding has been used within the last two months of the extension.

Ms. Greaves concluded that she still had concerns regarding the use of the funding allocated to the organization. It was clarified that Jack and Jill plans to expand upon the number of children served.

## **5. YMCA of South Florida**

Emilia Solano, representing YMCA of South Florida, recalled that this organization was funded during the previous CDBG cycle. The YMCA Employment Navigation program has met key goals, including 107% success in providing job-related education and resources for the community, 47% success in serving program participants, and 77% in referrals to community resources and organizations. YMCA's current request establishes similar goals, including assistance to families as well as individual heads of households with critical needs.

Mr. Cius noted that the federal government has changed its funding priorities over the past several months, and asked how the YMCA plans to help clients going forward. Ms. Solano replied that the program considers both current and future needs, including how to build on progress already achieved. Opportunities for advancement may include financial literacy education, moving from part-time to full-time employment, and education toward advancement.

Gabriel Ochoa, also representing YMCA of South Florida, explained that the Employment Navigation Program moves clients toward the goal of self-sufficiency. Former participants can come back to the program if they experience additional challenges.

Chair Rice asked if clients' long-term progress is tracked, including upward mobility and/or job retention. Ms. Solano replied that while some tracking is done, it is typically because the YMCA remains engaged with those former clients after they have achieved employment. The organization offers other programs that can help clients from the Employment Navigation program.

Mr. Docal requested clarification of the number of individuals helped by the Employment Navigation program. Mr. Ochoa stated that the goal for the coming year is to assist 330

clients. Clients are assessed and assigned to one of the program's two tiers depending upon their needs and goals. Over 50 community partners help address clients' needs.

Ms. Balfour asked how many employment navigators currently work within the program, as well as the number of current clients in the program. Ms. Solano replied that in the current cycle, there is one staff member supporting the Employment Navigation Program, in which 37 clients are enrolled. 115 clients have been referred to other community services and resources.

## **6. Oasis of Hope Community Development**

Jacqueline Reed, representing Oasis of Hope Community Development, explained that this organization is requesting assistance for their first-time home buyer and foreclosure prevention programs. Oasis of Hope develops homes and works with realtors and industry partners to assist with aspects of the home-buying process such as income certification and down payment assistance to qualified individuals. The goal is to ensure that prospective buyers know what they can afford.

The programs assist home buyers in crossing over barriers to home ownership such as credit and income issues. Oasis of Hope's incubator program works with these individuals to help build their savings. Since 2024, the first-time home buyer program has helped 539 attendants, 442 of whom earn less than 80% of area median income (AMI). Some participants may earn up to 120% of AMI; however, Oasis of Hope's focus is on assisting households with low to moderate incomes.

Ms. Goren asked how clients come to the program. Ms. Reed replied that Oasis of Hope has been in existence since 2008 and relies partly on word-of-mouth throughout the Fort Lauderdale community. She also emphasized the importance of community partners, including lenders. The programs currently have a lengthy waiting list. The City of Fort Lauderdale provides \$75,000 in assistance to qualified home buyers.

Mr. Docal asked how many clients are served by the incubator and foreclosure prevention programs. Ms. Reed replied that the incubator program prepares clients for home ownership, assisting them in building credit and savings while paying down debt. The foreclosure program helps clients prevent loss of their homes through foreclosure. She estimated that roughly 10% more clients are served by the incubator program than the foreclosure program.

## **7. Broward House**

Matt Patterson, representing Broward House, explained that CDBG funds are requested for the Pathways to Self-Sufficiency program. Broward House is the largest housing provider in Broward County for individuals living with HIV, serving roughly 250 clients per year through Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) and similar programs.

Of the 115 clients served in Broward House's assisted living facility in 2025, only 14 increased their earned incomes, and of the 72 apartments operated by the provider, approximately 20 were inhabited by clients who had jobs. Most HOPWA clients pay roughly one-third of their rent through earned income. Broward House seeks to help clients obtain better jobs or promotions in order to relieve some of the burden on available systems.

Mr. Patterson emphasized the importance of identifying community partners to help provide on-site workshops for clients. He pointed out that many Broward House clients have comorbidities or other disabilities in addition to HIV, and may have had stigmatizing experiences such as bad credit, criminal records, or absence from the job market.

Assistance for clients seeking jobs may include peer support, mental health support, and ways to work around barriers to employment. The agency also provides interview supplies, transportation, career coaching, and more.

Previous CDBG requests from Broward House have focused on wellness and physical activity; however, these components have been institutionalized, and the organization hopes to focus more closely on employment.

Ms. Balfour asked if Broward House's program is available only to in-house residents. Mr. Patterson explained that Broward House operates a 74-bed assisted living facility as well as a 72-unit apartment building for independent living. The program focuses on these two facilities, but can also help others who are willing to engage in programming. He recalled that the organization's Ryan White Program served 551 clients the previous year, only 370 of whom earned over 50% of AMI.

Mr. Cius asked what measures are taken in-house to ensure that CDBG funds are only used as a last resort. Mr. Patterson stated that Broward House seeks to identify the program that best fits each client and assigns funding after services have been delivered. Case managers work closely with clients to determine which program best suits them. Tamika Weaver, also representing Broward House, added that the organization also looks into how long-term clients can transition from their programs after two years, often suggesting that senior clients balance Social Security income with part-time employment.

Mr. Cius noted that it can be difficult to track clients' progress toward self-sufficiency, and asked what processes are used for this tracking. Mr. Patterson replied that Broward House tracks rent increases; as a client's portion of rent increases, this represents one step toward self-sufficiency. Income re-eligibility is calculated whenever clients receive an increase.

Ms. Balfour asked how participants for programs are selected, and which criteria apply for transportation assistance. Mr. Patterson replied that clients at the assisted living facility typically use transportation services from that location, while individuals in apartments can seek assistance through Broward House's directors of housing or residential services.

Ms. Greaves asked how the goal of 40 clients was determined. Mr. Patterson characterized this as a realistic number, noting that clients already enrolled in the HOPWA program can be tracked by rent eligibility. He confirmed that Broward House's housing department can track 40 individuals.

Ms. Greaves also asked what happens if a client becomes independent of Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Ms. Weaver explained that many clients may not be aware that they have the option to work to supplement their income. Broward House provided interested individuals with vocational rehabilitation. Once clients are aware they can work, they may be able to gradually leave SSI.

#### **8. Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman JFS of Broward County, Inc.**

Ronnie Eisenberg and Sandy Ala, representing Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman JFS of Broward County Inc., explained that this organization has existed since 1962 and serves the entire community. Their operations are based on three pillars of service:

- Basic needs services
- Older adult and Holocaust survivor assistance
- Behavioral health support

The organization currently serves over 1,000 Fort Lauderdale residents and requests CDBG support for residents served through their Pathways to Stability program. This program provides emergency financial assistance and housing stabilization services to residents with low to moderate incomes, as well as to households at risk of eviction, homelessness, or utility disconnection.

Goodman JFS has a team of case managers who identify households in crisis and provide short-term assistance for rent, mortgages, and utilities, as well as wraparound case management services to promote long-term stability. 15% of Fort Lauderdale residents live below the poverty line, which is significantly higher than the Broward County average.

Many households in Fort Lauderdale are cost-burdened, spending over 30% of income on housing and often vulnerable in the event of a crisis. The Pathways to Stability program combines immediate financial relief with long-term rehabilitation such as emergency financial assistance, individualized case management, and budgeting support. Goodman JFS also provides wraparound services to address both immediate crises and the root causes of instability to support clients experiencing food and clothing insecurity, workforce development, mental health services, and veterans' services.

The organization's goal is to serve 30 Fort Lauderdale households over the year with \$50,000, with a goal of helping 90% of clients maintain stable housing within six months of receiving assistance. Household services, financial assistance provided, and housing outcomes will be tracked. The program is supported through diversified funding, the majority of which is private.

Goals of the program include avoiding eviction and/or homelessness, maintaining safe and stable housing, building financial resilience, and providing access to critical communities.

Ms. Greaves requested more information regarding tracking. Ms. Ala replied that clients are tracked by a specific data management system which tracks outcomes and measures. New clients for financial assistance apply online or are assisted by case managers over the phone.

Mr. Hensley asked how many clients the program proposes to serve. Ms. Eisenberg replied that they hope to serve 30 clients annually through the Pathways to Stability program. Goodman JFS serves over 1,000 Fort Lauderdale clients across a range of programs.

Chair Rice asked how clients are recruited. Ms. Ala replied that clients are referred to the service via Broward 211 and other community partnerships, including United Way. She emphasized that all agencies seek to work together. They have significant experience in spaces that serve seniors aged 60 or older, such as senior centers, and can provide information and referrals in those locations.

## **9. Rotary Connection**

Gwynne Beatty and Garry Smyth, representing Rotary Connection, explained that this is a free transportation service that takes homeless individuals to needed resources in Greater Fort Lauderdale. The service makes 62 stops per day, including both services and pickups. A resource navigator is present on the bus all day and speaks with riders to determine where they are going and provide information about other services.

Rotary Connection provides ridership to homeless persons who seek to access medical facilities, housing authorities, food, documentation, recovery, and job training, with multiple stops for most of these needs. Since operations began in August 2025, they have provided rides to over 4,200 people on a single 14-seat bus. The service typically has 35 to 45 riders each day, averaging 700 riders per month.

Rotary Connection also provides reunification services to homeless individuals who would like to go home. The service contacts their family to ensure this is an option and provides the individual with a bus ticket and food for the trip. Over 70 individuals have been reunified with their families in this way.

Individuals in recovery are also served. If they express interest in going to a treatment facility, Rotary Connection helps determine the right facility for that person and takes them there on the same day. Ms. Beatty emphasized that a representative of the service walks into every facility with a departing individual and introduces them to intake. Rotary Connection also provides essential items, including clean socks and cold drinks.

This combination of services is unique to the Fort Lauderdale community. Rotary Connection is a division of Fellowship Recovery Community Organization, which contracts with the City of Fort Lauderdale for recovery housing and serves Community Court each week.

Ms. Balfour asked for more information on stops and timing. Mr. Smyth emphasized that no registration is involved for the service, and the bus operates on a schedule similar to a city bus. Riders can get on or off the bus at any stop on the route. Ms. Beatty added that demographic information is tracked to show how many riders get on or off the bus at each stop, including age, race/ethnicity, and services desired.

Mr. Cius asked for more information on engagement and the collection of demographic information. Mr. Smyth replied that information is collected as quickly as possible, with some estimations, and the number of individuals boarding or leaving at each stop is tracked.

Mr. Smyth emphasized the importance of finding out what may be holding riders back, as Rotary Connection's goal is to shorten the time an individual spends experiencing homelessness. The service can connect riders with other resources and take them to places that can help them access these resources. Facilities such as the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) are scheduled stops on the route.

Chair Rice noted that Rotary Connection is a new applicant, and asked if their affiliated organization, Fellowship Recovery Community Organization, has had any prior experience with CDBG funding from Broward municipalities or from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Mr. Smyth replied that the organization has no such experience.

Mr. Docal asked for the current source of Rotary Connection's funding. Mr. Smyth explained that the program does not use any tax dollars thus far. A number of community organizations worked together to provide startup funding, and some continue to provide additional funds. Fellowship Recovery Community Organization has assumed most of these costs. Private donors and other service clubs have also contributed small donations.

Ms. Greaves stated that she had observed the Rotary Connection bus at work and was impressed with its operations.

## **10. Harmon Kids Inc.**

Gwendolyn Shaw, representing Harmon Kids Inc., provided a handout to the Board members on the organization's activities within the Fort Lauderdale community. She introduced Stephanie Mathieu, who spoke on her experiences with the organization's Red Schoolhouse program.

Ms. Mathieu stated that Harmon Kids is requesting \$25,000. She explained that the organization operates through a collaborative partnership with Red Schoolhouse and Shaw Enterprises, which are established child care and educational service providers. Both organizations operate from the same location and share staff, classrooms, and program resources. Shaw Enterprises provides facility space, staffing support, program administration, and educational materials to Red Schoolhouse.

Elementary school students in the 33311 ZIP code district are approximately 30% lower than the Broward County average in reading and mathematics skills. The organization's request was reduced from \$50,000 to \$25,000 to assist 15 students at \$1,660 per student. She reviewed additional academic information from the 33311 ZIP code which showed that students in this district are lagging behind academically, with a majority of elementary students not reading at grade level.

Ms. Mathieu continued that students who have spent time at Red Schoolhouse and Harmon Kids often skip one to two grades when moving on to Walker Elementary or North Fork Elementary. This is based on testing performed over the years. Harmon Kids provides daily tutoring for children aged 0 through 12.

Chair Rice noted that some Harmon Kids attendees pay student tuition. Ms. Mathieu explained that tuition is determined on a sliding scale. Some families receiving documented assistance may pay \$0, while families earning some income pay \$80.

Mr. Docal asked if students are available for tuition assistance through the Step Up program. Ms. Mathieu replied that the organization has never received this funding but has recently reached out to Step Up to request partnership.

Chair Rice asked how CDBG funding would be used. Ms. Mathieu replied that it would help the organization serve more students. Some nearby elementary school students access tutoring through the program, for which their parents also pay a sliding scale.

Ms. Mathieu continued that most of the CDBG funds would go toward staffing, including personnel, primary direct service costs including two part-time tutors, educational supplies, and student enrichment activities. The funds can also assist with administrative support, new software, and facility support, although the main focus is on personnel.

Chair Rice expressed concern with the organization's lack of experience in grant management and reporting, as CDBG funds come with stringent reporting requirements. Ms. Mathieu thanked members of the City's Housing and Community Development Staff for their assistance in preparing their application.

Vice Chair Hughes left the meeting at 5:59 p.m.

The Board took a brief recess from 5:59 p.m. to 6:10 p.m.

## **VI. RANKING OF CDBG APPLICATIONS and FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chair Rice advised that Board members would now have the opportunity to change their scores, if necessary, after seeing the presentations. Ms. Williams also provided the City's scores for applicants based on previous receipt of CDBG funds and/or previous use of non-governmental funds.

Chair Rice asked if the City scores reflect the applicant organization as a whole or refers only to the specific program for which the organization is requesting funds. Ms. Williams explained that Staff considers the budget submitted by each organization and bases their response on the specific program within that budget.

It was clarified that while Harmon Kids Inc.'s application requested \$50,000, this request was reduced to \$25,000 as indicated during their presentation.

The Board members provided Ms. Williams with their scores, including any updated scores since the applicants' presentations.

The averaged scores for the applicants were as follows:

- Boys and Girls Club: 92
- Oasis of Hope South Florida: 87
- Rotary Connection 86
- Broward House 84
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless 84
- Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman JFS 82
- South Florida Institute on Aging 82
- YMCA of South Florida 81
- Harmon Kids Inc. 80
- Jack and Jill Children's Center 80

Chair Rice expressed concern with the disparities in some of the scores, requesting additional clarification from some of the Board members. She explained that in the past, the City Commission has questioned how accurately the Board followed their scoring rubric. She requested more information from members who had scored some organizations below 60.

Mr. Docal advised that he had scored one organization below 60, stating that while he felt all the presentations had been strong, his overall scores had been stricter than those of most other members. He pointed out that the highest score he had submitted was 87.

Ms. Greaves stated that she did not have her notes on the applications at hand, but characterized her scoring process as analytical and detail-oriented, which had led to some scores that were significantly lower than others.

Chair Rice explained that when the Board's recommendations are presented to the City Commission, she may be asked to justify the rankings based on the scoring rubric. She requested additional information on the reason behind the lower scores. Ms. Greaves stated again that she did not have her detailed notes at today's meeting. Chair Rice continued that her concern was that outlying scores did not affect some agencies' overall ranking.

Ms. Williams reviewed the timeline for submission of the Board's rankings to the City Commission, which requires 30 days' public notice. The Commission must review the rankings and make their own recommendations at one of the two June 2026 Commission meetings, as they will be in recess later in the summer. The funding recommendations must be submitted to HUD no later than August 15, 2026.

Chair Rice observed that there were additional examples of outlying scores, which in some cases involved organizations that have been funded with CDBG dollars in the past. She expressed concern that some of these agencies should have received higher scores in specific categories if the scoring rubric had been followed more closely.

Ms. Williams suggested that, in the absence of backup data on hand to justify some of the lower scores, the Board may wish to consider not including Ms. Greaves' scores in the tabulations of those agencies' overall rankings.

The rankings were tabulated once again with the following results:

- Boys and Girls Club 91
- Rotary Connection 90
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless 88
- Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman JFS 88
- Broward House 87
- Jack and Jill Children's Center 86
- Oasis of Hope South Florida 85
- YMCA of South Florida 85
- Harmon Kids Inc. 80
- South Florida Institute on Aging 80

**Motion** made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Ms. Goren, to remove the one set of scores. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 8-0.

The Board discussed the funding amounts to be awarded to the applicants based on the rankings listed above. It was noted that each organization had requested \$50,000, with the exception of Harmon Kids Inc, which had lowered their request to \$25,000. Ms. Williams clarified that available CDBG funding is estimated at \$234,261.15.

The members discussed different ways to fund the organizations based on their rankings. It was suggested that the top three high-scoring teams be funded at their full requested amounts of \$50,000.

**Motion** made by Ms. Balfour to fully fund Boys and Girls Club and Rotary Connection.

Chair Rice requested that this **motion** be tabled until the potential funding amounts for all applicants have been fully reviewed.

Chair Rice noted that there were more CDBG applicants this year than in the past few years, including several first-time applicants. There was additional discussion of first-time applicants which have not previously dealt with the stringent reporting requirements for CDBG funding. Chair Rice proposed funding all agencies at amounts lower than they had requested. Ms. Balfour also noted that some of the organizations receive funds from the state of Florida as well as other significant sources.

Ms. Greaves advised that she did not want to fund Harmon Kids Inc. with less than \$10,000, emphasizing the years that the organization has served a specific area of the City. It was noted that due to limited funding, multiple applicants could receive less than 50% of their requested amounts. Ms. Balfour also pointed out that not all of the applicants were organizations that fit into specific City Commission priorities.

The following funding amounts were determined:

- Boys and Girls Club \$45,000
- Rotary Connection \$40,000
- Dr. Stanley and Pearl Goodman JFS \$35,000
- Broward Partnership for the Homeless \$35,000
- Broward House \$20,000
- Jack and Jill Children's Center \$15,000
- YMCA of South Florida \$12,500
- South Florida Institute on Aging \$11,761.15
- Harmon Kids Inc. \$7,500
- **Total:** **\$234,261.15**

**Motion** made by Mr. Hensley, seconded by Mr. Docal, that we fund Partnership for the Homeless \$35,000, South Florida Aging \$11,761.15, Boys and Girls Club \$45,000, Jack

and Jill Center \$15,000, YMCA of Florida \$12,500, Oasis of Hope \$12,500, Broward House \$20,000, Pearl Goodman JFS \$35,000, Rotary Connection \$40,000, and Harmon Kids \$7,500. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 7-0. (Ms. Greaves abstained. A memorandum of voting conflict is attached to these minutes.)

Chair Rice concluded that Staff will submit the Board's recommendations to the City Commission and will keep the Board apprised of any further developments.

## **VII. GOOD OF THE ORDER**

None.

## **VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

## **IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA**

**Next meeting – May 11, 2026**

## **X. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 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.]