

**City of Fort Lauderdale  
Community Services Board  
November 18, 2013 – 4:00 P.M.  
City Commission Chambers – City Hall  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

| <b>MEMBERS</b>            |   | <b>October 2013-September 2014</b> |               |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------|
|                           |   | <b>PRESENT</b>                     | <b>ABSENT</b> |
| Richard Whipple, Chair    | P | 1                                  | 1             |
| Wendy Gonsler, Vice Chair | P | 2                                  | 0             |
| Benjamin Bean             | P | 1                                  | 1             |
| Margaret Birch            | P | 2                                  | 0             |
| Ann Clark                 | P | 2                                  | 0             |
| Mark Fillers              | P | 1                                  | 1             |
| Wanda Francis             | P | 2                                  | 0             |
| Helen Hinton              | A | 1                                  | 1             |
| Jason King                | P | 2                                  | 0             |
| Jasmin Shirley            | P | 2                                  | 0             |

**Staff Present**

Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator  
Jonathan Brown, Manager, Housing and Community Development  
Marcia Gair, Administrative Aide  
Lisa Edmondson, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement: As of November 5, 2013, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum.**

Chair Whipple called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Roll was called and all stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS**

The Board and Staff members present introduced themselves at this time.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 14, 2013**

**Motion** made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Vice Chair Gonsler, to approve. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Whipple noted that while Chair and Vice Chair elections were not listed on the Agenda, this Item was communicated to the Board via email.

Ms. Birch nominated Chair Whipple for another term as Chair, seconded by Vice Chair Gonsler. In a voice vote, Chair Whipple was re-elected by acclamation.

Mr. Fillers nominated Vice Chair Gonsler for another term as Vice Chair, seconded by Mr. Bean. In a voice vote, Vice Chair Gonsler was re-elected by acclamation.

#### **IV. CDBG REVIEW / FOLLOW UP**

Mr. Brown noted that questions had arisen at the October meeting regarding the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, application, and scorecard. He requested that the Board members review these questions for clarity. Vice Chair Gonsler explained that there had been inconsistencies in the expenditures by date, which varied from a few days earlier to months earlier, which made it appear that some agencies had not been spending their allocations. She suggested that the reporting periods for different agencies might be more similar.

Mr. Brown advised that some agencies do not reimburse on a monthly basis, which meant these discrepancies in the scorecards will continue. Agencies that cannot document their service to eligible clients will not be reimbursed.

Vice Chair Gonsler stated that scorecards should document expenses up until a given month even if those agencies have not reported recent expenditures. She added that agencies should be advised to submit their invoices in a timely manner, and the Board should be made aware of any agency that has not submitted an invoice in a significant amount of time.

Mr. Fillers noted that the dates included on the scorecards referred to when invoices were submitted to the City; the client's actual expenditure may have occurred 30 to 90 days prior. Mr. Brown confirmed this. Mr. Fillers asserted that if an agency cannot demonstrate how their funds are spent within a reasonable time frame, it was not providing accurate feedback on its performance. He felt agencies should provide metrics that show what they have achieved each month. Mr. Brown observed that in the future, contracts will require agencies to spend one-fourth of their CDBG funds each quarter. If these funds are not spent, it will be reported to the Board.

Vice Chair Gonsler proposed that six months' performance indicators be added to the scorecards. Mr. Brown replied that it may not be possible to address this issue during the current funding cycle, as the existing performance indicators were recommended by the Board, approved by the City Commission, and included in the agencies' contracts; however, it may be possible to add this criterion in the future. He recommended that reporting be done at least quarterly, as this time period is a trigger in the agencies'

contracts in terms of providing spending information. Vice Chair Gonsher felt this could be determined on an agency-by-agency basis.

Mr. Fillers disagreed, stating that all agencies should be required to report on a quarterly basis. The Board could identify unique issues or agencies when reviewing scorecards. Vice Chair Gonsher clarified that some agencies should have different timelines on which to measure their performance indicators. She suggested that the Board review the quality and effectiveness of an agency on a separate basis than the quantity and figures that can be provided by some agencies, as numbers may not always reflect improvement.

Ms. Shirley asked if the CDBG grants, which average \$35,000-\$40,000, make allowances for administrative costs. Mr. Brown confirmed this. Ms. Shirley pointed out that this may not be sufficient funding for some agencies to have their staffs provide more reporting. Mr. Fillers asserted that if a contract lists 90-day intervals for payment, the Board should be able to review an agency's progress through its financial activity during that time frame. If there are agencies that cannot provide this information, they may be invited to discuss their activities with the Board.

Ms. Shirley asked if the agencies or City Staff complete the scorecards. Mr. Brown replied that this is done by the agencies, while Staff provides any comments about expenditure and compliance concerns. Staff also reviews documentation to ensure that a given agency is reporting an accurate number of eligible clients served. Ms. Francis suggested that an agency's comments on its progress and expenditures could help the Board understand what they have been able to achieve, particularly if there is a delay in its reporting of expenditures.

Mr. Brown noted that the Board had raised questions in October regarding the purchase of equipment by Luz Del Mundo using CDBG funds. He advised that agencies are not allowed to use their CDBG funds to buy equipment: they may instead use these funds toward staffing, utilities, leasing, or other expenses that can be documented without triggering a finding. It is very difficult to accurately document the use of equipment, as the equipment would need to be monitored throughout its useful life.

Ms. Shirley asked if this is clearly explained to agencies during the application process. Mr. Brown said Staff ensures the agencies spend their funds in ways that meet HUD's eligibility requirements, and that the agencies are put in the best position to avoid placing the City's CDBG program at risk.

Vice Chair Gonsher stated that this results in a discrepancy between what the Board approves and what is actually funded: for example, they may approve an application requesting funds for the purchase of equipment, but the agency's scorecards track other expenses instead. She suggested that the scorecards could track how funds previously used for staffing have been redirected in order to monitor the effective use of grant

funds. Mr. Brown noted that the number of clients an agency plans to serve, and the way it plans to serve them, do not change no matter how the funding is used.

Ms. Shirley agreed that Luz Del Mundo had wished to use CDBG funds to purchase a specific piece of equipment to deliver a particular service to their clients. Mr. Brown said the agency's clients continue to receive all the services to which the agency has committed; however, CDBG funds were not used to purchase the equipment, which meant the use of the equipment is not tracked. Vice Chair Gonsler declared that the application approved by the Board had sought to provide vision testing, but this specific testing is not included on the scorecard. Mr. Brown advised that he would need to review the agency's application before commenting on this issue.

Mr. Fillers said another issue is that agencies are advised to apply for funding under certain categories that can be tracked rather than the service on which their funds are actually spent. Mr. Brown explained that Staff works to ensure that agencies spend their funds on eligible activities; Staff is also aware of activities that have contributed to findings in the past.

Ms. Shirley pointed out that federal regulations require an agency to document its expenditures on the proposed item: if an agency says it wishes to use funds to buy equipment, they should spend their money to do so. If they stated that funds would be used to pay the salaries of staff members who will be using the equipment, these salary expenditures should be reported.

Mr. Brown advised that the Board may not be able to change what is reported upon by an agency according to its contract; in the case of Luz Del Mundo, the contract would state that funds were to be spent on personnel. Mr. Fillers stated that he objected to reporting information that was not part of an agency's request.

Ms. Shirley recalled that some agencies had applied for funding under categories for which they might not be best suited, but which might be less competitive. Mr. Brown agreed that this should be discussed further if the Board wishes to impose more specific requirements. Vice Chair Gonsler noted that this issue may arise when an agency may apply for funding for the population it plans to serve or for the needs it plans to address. Mr. Brown advised that he will need sufficient time to present any changes in categories to the City Commission. He recommended that this discussion be added to the next month's agenda.

Chair Whipple stated that the CDBG applications should include criteria by which the Board may deduct points from agencies that do not follow application guidelines, such as submission of an application prior to the stated deadline or in an appropriate binder. Mr. Brown said while the City has no issues with this requirement, the City Commission has been known to amend the deadline for some agencies. Applications are also required to be submitted in tabbed binders. He requested clarification of the distinction between an agency's output and outcome.

Chair Whipple added that agencies requesting an increased amount of funding should include a review of their services under their current contract, as well as a listing of the additional services that would be provided if the funding is increased.

Mr. Brown noted that most agencies do not receive the amount of funding they request: for example, if an agency is funded at \$35,000 instead of the requested \$50,000, they may only serve 35 clients instead of 50. Ms. Shirley pointed out that the agency should clearly show the current funding represented new clients served, not clients served the previous year. Chair Whipple agreed, stating that the agencies should clearly state what they have accomplished in the current year as well as what they expected to accomplish using the additional money requested for the next year.

Ms. Francis commented that agencies requesting additional funding in subsequent cycles should be doing so because their programs are very successful. She felt the applications should reflect these positive outcomes. Mr. Brown noted that one challenge the Board faces is that the application process reaches them in February or March of a given year, when the agencies are only halfway through their funding cycles. This prevents the Board from knowing how successful their programs will be in the end. Ms. Francis felt the scorecards should reflect these agencies' success before the funding cycle is complete. Mr. Fillers suggested that the agencies' application materials provide a brief history regarding funds approved for the previous year in order to serve as a baseline for the Board.

## **V. HOPWA UPDATE**

Mr. DeSantis reported that the Board members were provided with a document showing unspent funds. He noted that MDEI has been closed out and has submitted its final reconciliation; while this agency's funding had originally been reduced from the requested amount due to its late submittal, the City Commission had later reinstated an equitable portion of funds to all agencies.

Mr. Brown advised that in the past, agencies with unused funds were allowed to roll these funds over into the next year, provided that the agency continued to receive Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) funding. The City Commission has now asked to see this unexpended funding before any funds can be rolled over into the next year. This is to ensure that agencies are spending their funds in accordance with federal requirements. He noted that the Board is not asked to take any action on this item, but is being made aware of the unexpended funds over the years.

Mr. DeSantis clarified that the unexpended funds include not only funds not spent during the current year, but any remaining unexpended funds from previous years. Mr. Brown added that HUD funds are spent on a "first in, first out" basis, which means unexpended funds from previous years are spent before an agency begins spending current funds.

The Board members discussed the funds rolled forward by the various agencies. Vice Chair Gonsler requested that the document include an additional column reflecting how much money was unspent during a previous year or years in the HOPWA program. Ms. Birch asserted that she was very concerned with the large amounts of unexpended funds rolled forward by some agencies, particularly if a large amount was rolled forward by the same agency each year in the program.

Mr. DeSantis advised that next year, he would be able to inform the Board members of the average expenditures by each agency during its years in the program, as compared to the total amount of funding that agency may request. This would help the Board determine how much funding the agencies need during a given year, and would ultimately lead to a better overall use of funds.

Mr. Brown recalled that the Housing Authority had received some units under the HOPWA program in previous years; it had recently been determined that this agency would not be able to provide the necessary supportive services for these units, and the City Commission has not reallocated funding to the Housing Authority. This means that at a future meeting, the Board will need to discuss what must be done with these units, possibly through an RFP process.

Mr. DeSantis concluded that Staff would hold its first user group meeting during the current week in order to develop the HOPWA Administrative Procedures Manual. This will ensure all agencies are conducting business in the same manner. The user group consists of one representative from each HOPWA program: an agency participating in three programs, for example, would send three representatives to the meeting. The representatives will provide feedback on the Administrative Procedures Manual and take it back to their agencies once it has been finalized. The agencies will then have 30 days to train their staff on the changes reflected in the manual.

## **VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. Birch requested clarification of the Annual Action Plan for 2013-14. Mr. Brown said this plan includes information related to what the agencies are approved to receive, as well as a description of both the programs and the clients to be served. These amounts are typically presented to the City Commission in June or July of a given year. The Annual Action Plan is sent to HUD by August 15 of every year.

Ms. Shirley asserted that certain criteria used in the CDBG process should be included in the application itself, which would make it more likely for the City Commission to honor the Board's decisions on these criteria. Examples of "fatal flaws" could include submitting applications by the stated deadline, providing applications that are properly bound, or other errors.

Mr. Brown cautioned that the City's Procurement Department policies allow for due process, which means an agency may appeal to the City Commission to determine

whether or not a given criterion is a fatal flaw. The Board would not be able to override this portion of the procurement process for agencies responding to RFPs. He noted that the examples cited by Ms. Shirley, such as timely submission of an application or proper binding of booklets, were less likely to be overturned by the Commission as part of the CDBG process, as that is a competitive application; however, Procurement controls the RFPs submitted for HOPWA funding.

Chair Whipple stated that this information should be shared by Staff with the agencies applying for CDBG funding during an upcoming public meeting.

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

It was determined that the Board would discuss the CDBG program categories the following month. Chair Whipple also requested further clarification of the HOPWA scoring sheet. Mr. DeSantis said he would also provide an update on the Housing Authority units.

Vice Chair Gonsler asked for a copy of the CDBG application prior to the next meeting. Mr. Brown observed that this would be the same application the Board has seen previously. Any changes to the application could be discussed further at the next meeting.

Mr. Fillers requested clarification of the difference between the CDBG and HOPWA allocations. Mr. Brown explained that the major difference is that the Procurement Department receives HOPWA applications through the RFP process, while CDBG requests are a competitive application process. Bids on the RFP are sent to Procurement, while CDBG applications would come through City Staff.

## **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 5:36 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]