

**City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
February 10, 2014 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers – City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

MEMBERS		October 2013-September 2014	
		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wendy Gonsler, Chair	P	5	0
Helen Hinton, Vice Chair	P	4	1
Benjamin Bean	A	3	2
Ann Clark	A	4	1
Mark Fillers	P	3	2
Wanda Francis	P	4	1
Andrew Jimenez	P	2	1
Jason King	A	4	1
Jasmin Shirley	P	5	0

Staff Present

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

Communications to City Commission

Motion made by Chair Gonsler, seconded by Mr. Fillers, to strongly encourage City Commissioners to fill the vacant spots on the Community Services Board. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of January 30, 2014, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Vice Chair Gonsler called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance and roll was called.

It was noted that there are presently nine members appointed to the Board, as members Richard Whipple and Margaret Birch had recently resigned.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

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

III. BOARD ELECTIONS

Motion made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Ms. Hinton, to nominate Wendy Gonsher as Chair. In a voice vote, Ms. Gonsher was unanimously elected Chair.

Motion made by Ms. Shirley, seconded by Mr. Fillers, to nominate Helen Hinton as Vice Chair. In a voice vote, Ms. Hinton was unanimously elected Vice Chair.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 13, 2014

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

V. CDBG REVIEW

Mr. Brown reported that only six applications have been received for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Services funding thus far. The Board discussed the procedure for reviewing these proposals, which presently includes two meetings in April to hear presentations and review and score applications. The goal is to submit the Board's recommendations by the City Commission's second May meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Shirley, that the Board do a session in April and one session in May to do the wrap-up. In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 2-4 (Chair Gonsher, Vice Chair Hinton, Ms. Francis, and Mr. Jiminez dissenting).

Motion made by Vice Chair Hinton, seconded by Ms. Francis, that the Board meet on [April] 14, listen to the presentations, and come back on the 21st of April for the final score. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 5-1 (Mr. Fillers dissenting).

Mary Riedel, representing Women in Distress of Broward County, requested that this agency be included in the CDBG application process, although they had missed a mandatory meeting for all applicants. She explained that they did not receive notice of the deadline, despite attempting to contact City Staff to clarify the date. Mr. Brown confirmed that Staff was not opposed to the request, and that two other agencies had seen the posted notice but failed to submit application summary forms within the time frame. He asked that the Board consider granting all three agencies' requests.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Mr. Jiminez, to accept the three organizations who did not meet that first meeting, provided they do fulfill all of the requirements on the checklist before the submission on February 19.

The members discussed the **motion**, including the notification process for agencies, the "fatal flaw" language discussed by the Board at previous meetings, and the appropriateness of making concessions for these prospective applicants. It was noted that at least two of the agencies have applied for CDBG funds in the past and met all requirements at those times. Mr. Brown explained that he had informed the agencies

their application summaries could not be accepted after the deadline, but concluded that it is the Board's decision whether or not to accept the summaries at this time. The additional two agencies are Neighborhood Housing Services and Legal Aid.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 4-2 (Vice Chair Hinton and Ms. Shirley dissenting).

Ms. Shirley requested that the Board review the pre-application process once more at a subsequent meeting in order to dispel potential confusion in the future. Vice Chair Hinton pointed out that today's approval for the three agencies was for the submission process only, and did not guarantee that they would receive funding.

VI. HOPWA UPDATE

Mr. DeSantis reported that the City Commission approved termination of the contract for Minority Development and Empowerment Inc. (MDEI). The funds originally slated for this agency were divided equally between Care Resource and SunServe.

He continued that community feedback meetings are being planned with regard to the short-term rent, mortgage and utilities (STRMU) and permanent housing placement (PFP) programs. This will allow the public to comment on the options related to potential changes in these programs. Dates and locations for these forums will be posted in local newspapers and sent to Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) and similar agencies. Once feedback has been received, it will be presented at the next available CSB meeting, along with options on how the programs might be changed. The changes will not involve eligibility, but will be related to frequency and use of services.

Mr. DeSantis moved on to discuss HOPWA goals, explaining that the purpose of the program is to devise long-term strategies for persons with HIV/AIDS who have low incomes; however, the program has been operating in a crisis mode, administering the STRMU and PHP programs due to the nature of clients' needs. The intent is to move clients off subsidies in order to bring new clients onto them. Staff is working to educate the community that HOPWA is not a permanent subsidy in most cases.

The following were identified as HOPWA goals:

- Stabilize housing by providing assistance and supportive services to reduce the risk of homelessness;
- Move households toward self-sufficiency through the use of HOPWA subsidies, such as tenant-based, project-based, and facility-based vouchers;
- Annually move households off housing subsidies to self-sufficiency;
- Maintain self-sufficiency through use of the STRMU program and individualized housing plans.

Mr. DeSantis advised that once a comprehensive housing plan is developed, the client must work on the plan with a case manager to determine how funds can be saved and leveraged and the individual can be fully stabilized after the use of STRMU. This would

mean stopping evictions, preventing clients from losing their housing units, and working with them so they can maintain these units. He also noted that Fort Lauderdale offers a much wider continuum of care than other municipalities, and must ensure that one program is not enhanced at the expense of another.

Mr. DeSantis moved on to unexpended funds, explaining that these are all funds dated from before September 30, 2013 and rolled over from the previous year. Mr. Brown clarified that some of the funds are contractually expired, although Legal Aid and the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center's contracts were extended. These expired funds, which total \$2.7 million, will be reallocated.

It was noted that the previous year, disbursement of HOPWA funds was reduced due to the uncertainty of how sequestration would affect funding. These unused funds are one-time dollars: once they are spent, no further funds will come in to supplant them. They must be used for one-time projects, which may extend through the one remaining year of the three-year RFP.

Mr. DeSantis reviewed his funding recommendations, noting that the previous year's budget did not include funds for either the Susan B. Anthony Center or Legal Aid. Mr. Brown advised that the Board and the City Commission had not funded these agencies, as Legal Aid had nearly 100% of their funds remaining due to the delay in approving their contract and because the Susan B. Anthony Center had not yet submitted any invoices; instead, these agencies' contracts were extended.

One issue is STRMU applications, for which the City expects to be \$298,000 short by the end of fiscal 2014. This is another reason to restructure the process and use leftover funds to meet this shortfall; in October, new frequency rules will apply to the program. Funds would go specifically toward rent, mortgage, utilities, or moving-in costs rather than agencies' salaries or other expenses.

Mr. DeSantis continued that another one-time project would be for SunServe and Care Resources, which are housing case management agencies: the funds could be used to help agencies lower their client ratio and provide better quality of service to the individuals they serve. He recommended that each agency receive an additional \$100,000 over a two-year period to hire one to two case managers. This would also facilitate an integrated comprehensive plan to keep clients in their residential units. At the end of the two-year period, however, this position would not be funded again.

He concluded that any remaining funds should be used to acquire one-bedroom and efficiency units, as these units are in great need. HOPWA agencies would be the owners of the property, and funds would be effectively recycled back into the system through this capital investment. This would be preferable to the City leasing the buildings to the agencies, as the City does not wish to assume the liability for the properties. The units would have a HOPWA-restrictive covenant, which means they would be required to serve eligible clients for a number of years.

Chair Gonsler pointed out that this could mean other agencies, in the future, must place their clients in buildings that may be owned by different agencies. Mr. Brown agreed that this could occur, but noted that agencies responding to future RFPs would be aware of this issue. It was also clarified that if the agency owning the building did not receive funding in the future and ceased to offer services, they would be in violation of the restrictive covenant. Units must continue to be occupied by HOPWA-eligible clients. Mr. Brown noted that the Housing Authority could be established as landlord, with an agency secured to deal with day-to-day issues and support services.

The members determined that the use of \$2 million for the purchase of housing units would be discussed further at a later meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Francis, to approve the funding for Legal Aid at \$187,000, and Susan B. Anthony at \$92,000, and the \$200,000 for caseworkers to be used for case management [by SunServe and Care Resource] as a motion to be acted on and put in effect immediately. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Mr. DeSantis noted that funds will also need to be reallocated for 2014-15, possibly at the May or June 2014 meeting, as well as discussion of the 2015-18 HOPWA RFP.

VII. HOPWA AGENCIES – STATUS UPDATES

Patrice Paldino, representing Legal Aid Services of Broward County, distributed a summary of the agency's activities. They are serving 151 unduplicated clients with 227 cases. Each client receives an average of six hours of legal time. She agreed that housing case managers are very overworked and noted that full use of legal services would allow case managers to more effectively stabilize clients. At present, 100% of clients represented by Legal Aid are avoiding eviction or negotiating lease rescission.

Gary Sullivan, representing Broward House, advised that this agency provides project-based, tenant-based, and facility-based voucher programs. The agency owns and manages its own buildings and subscribe to the philosophy that housing is health care. Tenants in HOPWA-based programs also have access to other services provided by Broward House, including mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and case management. A housing fair is scheduled for March 12 and will be in collaboration with other partner agencies to pool resources and expose tenants to options.

Rachael Williams of Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC), which oversees the STRMU, PHP, and tenant-based rental voucher programs, stated that they seek to provide safe, stable long-term housing for clients. Vouchers allow clients the opportunity to seek their own places of residence within Broward County. During the past year, BRHPC served 141 unduplicated clients, six of whom transitioned to permanent independent living through various means. Housing plans are provided for each client to ensure stability upon discharge from the program.

Atensia Earp, representing Care Resource Broward, advised that the agency is a federally qualified health center with two HOPWA case managers. They provide wraparound services, including housing, peer, and medical services, along with several additional programs and projects to help maintain clients, including mental health and substance abuse counseling. HOPWA case managers serve only housing needs.

A representative of Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO) reported that this agency funds project-based rent and has recently begun to provide support services as well, including a mentoring component to connect clients to community organizations. They are in need of an additional case manager, as their only case manager presently serves 28 clients. It was also requested that MODCO and other agencies be allowed to use HOPWA funds for the 40-year building inspection process.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Vice Chair Hinton, for a case manager for [MODCO] and \$26,000 to meet [the] upgrade inspection issues so [the agency] can continue to provide service to those that need it in the community.

Mr. Fillers clarified that his intent was to provide \$26,000 to MODCO to deal with the 40-year inspection issues only, and table the case manager issue until the next meeting for further discussion. He **amended** his **motion** to include only the \$26,000 for 40-year inspection issues.

Mr. DeSantis recommended that no specific dollar amount be listed in the **motion**. It was decided that the **motion** would refer to "an amount up to \$26,000," with bills to be submitted listing the actual amounts.

The **motion** was restated as follows: [for] up to \$26,000 to cover the costs associated with the 40-year inspection costs.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Vice Chair Hinton, for a case manager for the limited duration of one year for [MODCO] at the rate as [the Board has] looked at for the other two, which is \$100,000.

It was noted that in the earlier discussion, \$100,000 was intended to cover the cost of two case managers for one year or one case manager for two years.

The Board members discussed the **motion**, suggesting that the issue be tabled so other agencies could also have the opportunity to come before the Board and present their needs. Mr. DeSantis said he would provide a breakdown of the number of case managers, by agency, program, client load, and responsibilities at the next meeting.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 3-3 (Chair Gonsler, Ms. Francis, and Mr. Jimenez dissenting).

Lois Westerhoff of Shadowood stated that this agency has served the HIV-positive community for over 20 years. Homeless persons may enter the program for up to one year and receive life skill training and other skills needed for independent living. Many clients are physically or mentally challenged and could not succeed in independent housing. The agency currently provides housing, food, utilities, and education in facility-based housing for \$55/day. Shadowood has one case manager.

Gary Hemsley of SunServe stated that this agency provides housing case management and has served more than 284 unduplicated clients with four case managers. They have superseded their contractual obligation with the number of clients served. The current client to case manager ratio is roughly 70/1. A new case manager will begin work with SunServe the following week and will allow them to assist clients who speak Creole. They work closely with BRHPC, Legal Aid, the Housing Authority, and many other partner agencies.

Dr. Krista Bloom of the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center reported that this is the only agency in Broward offering residential treatment to women and their children for co-occurring disorders. They can serve 60 families at a time at their facility and provide an array of services. Each client is provided with a case manager; case managers have a caseload of approximately 30 clients each. Clients also receive 30 hours of group services each week. Follow-up care is provided for a minimum of six months after a client leaves the facility.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Ms. Shirley, for a case management person for MODCO and for Shadowood, equal to what the Board approved for SunServe and for Care Resource, [for] one person, two years.

Mr. Fillers asserted the importance of having individuals at agencies who can advocate for their clients, and stated that he felt it was the Board's responsibility to help provide this advocacy. Mr. Jimenez pointed out, however, that they Board should more fully understand the roles of case managers at each agency before deciding how to allocate unused funds. He felt it would be best to allow Mr. DeSantis to provide this information at the next meeting before action is taken.

In a roll call vote, the **motion** failed 3-3 (Chair Gonsler, Ms. Francis, and Mr. Jimenez dissenting).

VIII. GOOD OF THE ORDER / PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

IX. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Mr. DeSantis reiterated that he would bring more information to the next meeting for the Board to consider before taking further action on the allocation of unexpended funds. This will include a breakdown of project-, facility-, and tenant-based programs, what case managers are expected to do for each type of program, and the support service funds allotted to these positions at each agency.

X. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

Motion made by Chair Gonsler, seconded by Mr. Fillers, to strongly encourage City Commissioners to fill the spots vacated [on this Board] with representatives from their areas. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

It was noted that Staff was not certain how many positions were currently open on the Board. Mr. Brown said this information would be provided at the next meeting.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

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