



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

Approved
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
August 13, 2018 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

October 2017-September 2018

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
Wanda Francis, Chair	P	7	2
Jasmin Shirley, Vice Chair	P	9	0
Laurel Bolderson	P	1	0
Thais De La Cuba	P	2	0
April Kirk	P	8	1
Anthony McFann	P	7	2
Richard Morris	P	9	0
Noah Szugajew	A	7	2

Staff Present

Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator
Rachel Williams, Administrative Assistant I
Michael Mitchel, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of May 14, 2018, there are 9 appointed members to the Board, which means 5 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Francis called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll was called and it was noted a quorum was present at the meeting.

Mr. DeSantis requested that the Board amend today’s Agenda in order to discuss plans for the September 2018 meeting. The Board agreed by consensus that this discussion would be added after the Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) update.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Francis advised that former Board member Mark Fillers has resigned, as he has moved outside Fort Lauderdale. She introduced new member Laurel Bolderson.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – June 11, 2018 Minutes

Motion made by Vice Chair Shirley, seconded by Mr. McFann, to approve the minutes from June 11. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG UPDATES

Mr. DeSantis reported that most agencies receiving funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program have either spent their funds or are on track to do so. Most agencies are expected to have spent their funds by the September 30, 2018 deadline. Ms. Williams and Ms. Kirk are continuing to work together on the Community-Based Development Organizations (CBDO) applications.

V. HOPWA UPDATES

- **Special Presentation: MODCO**

Dr. Rosalind Osgood, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), explained that the agency provides project-based housing, but feels there is a missing intermediate step in its continuum of care. Individuals transitioning from prison to the general population or from homelessness to independent living can benefit from a shared housing environment, where they can learn life skills. MODCO is requesting \$66,849.38, which includes \$8569.08 in start-up costs, of uncommitted HOPWA funds so they can introduce a shared housing initiative.

The initiative would allow MODCO to rent a house and place four male tenants in this shared living environment. They would be able to work with the agency and its services for one year. Another part of the proposal allows a male staff member to serve as a “house coach,” interacting with the tenants and monitoring their progress. MODCO hopes to launch the pilot program beginning in November 2018.

The Board discussed the proposal, with Ms. Kirk asking if there are any external issues related to the landlord, retrofitting the home, or zoning that would need to be addressed prior to November. Dr. Osgood advised that MODCO is renting the house from the landlord, which provides for a different model. Tenants would come to MODCO offices to fulfill programmatic requirements. The house would be subject to inspection prior to the beginning of the program.

Ms. Williams further clarified that the house would not violate City Code, as it would operate in a similar manner to a house occupied by roommates. Mr. DeSantis noted that each room in the home would have an individual refrigerator and locker for the residents’ property.

Mr. Morris requested a breakdown of the total monthly rent for the project, including the tenant portion. Dr. Osgood explained that each HOPWA client is entitled to a certain amount of funds. Rent would cost \$2800/month for each resident, with a portion

subsidized by HOPWA. Tenants would be asked to pay 30% of their income toward rent, which is consistent with the existing HOPWA model. When these incomes are determined, more definitive numbers will be available.

Dr. Osgood continued that this model has not been tried before in Fort Lauderdale, although opportunities for shared housing are available through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Some individuals with steady jobs remain unable to afford market-rate rents. The shared living program will help these clients advance toward independent living.

Mr. McFann pointed out that the City has recently redefined Zoning Code with regard to group homes, and expressed concern that the program might fall into this category. He recommended that the program's language be crafted in a manner to ensure Code Enforcement does not become involved. Dr. Osgood advised that MODCO is working closely with City Staff to make sure the program is properly vetted.

Chair Francis asked if the clients in shared housing will have to be employed. Dr. Osgood explained that while employment is not required, HOPWA would like the participants in the program to have some type of income. Mr. DeSantis added that individuals receiving HOPWA funds are strongly encouraged to secure at least a part-time job within their first six months as clients.

Chair Francis also addressed the needs of individuals transitioning from prison, who will have neither housing nor a job. Dr. Osgood stated that she is working to secure funding for a pre-release mentoring program into prisons so MODCO would begin working with individuals who will shortly be released. This would allow them to build relationships with inmates before they are released so they can be introduced to the continuum of care.

Mr. Morris commented that he would like to see an overview of market-rate rents, as well as alternative options for other shared housing agreements in different units. Ms. Williams replied that there is already a specific property in mind for the proposed program. Staff then approached HUD to ensure the proposed model is acceptable to them. While HUD confirmed that there is nothing to prevent the use of this model, they also cautioned against labeling the property as a HOPWA property. HUD also allowed the cost of the property to be up to 20% above fair market rent (FMR).

Mr. DeSantis explained that the Board is asked to make a motion for the dollar amount from the fiscal year (FY) 2018-2019 uncommitted HOPWA funds. If approved, Staff can begin paperwork to support the project and take it before the City Commission. The deadline for the expenditure of these unused HOPWA dollars is within five years, or by October 2023.

Motion made by Vice Chair Shirley, seconded by Mr. McFann, for approval of the shared housing proposal as presented by MODCO for the amount of \$66,849.38.

Ms. Kirk advised that while she was in favor of this proposal, she would like to see a better process for distributing uncommitted funds so other HOPWA providers would have the chance to present alternative programs as well.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 6-1 (Mr. Morris dissenting).

- **Proposed State Funding**

Ms. Williams reported that the previous week, the Florida Department of Health contacted Staff to ask if they were in need of additional HOPWA funding, as Fort Lauderdale is one of the largest municipalities providing HOPWA services in the state. Because the proposed state funds are not entitlement dollars, the City requested clarification of whether this would create a conflict of interest from HUD's perspective. They also requested clarification of the terms of acceptance of these funds, including whether the state has repurposed these funds with legislative approval. The funds in question are set to expire in June 2019, which would mean the City had a very limited time frame in which to spend them.

Ms. Williams concluded that Staff will keep the Board informed of the progress of this discussion. If the City decides to accept the funds, and is granted approval by HUD, they will come back to the Board with suggestions on how to use them effectively in the community.

Vice Chair Shirley requested clarification of the source of the funds. Ms. Williams explained that they would come from another HUD appropriation to a state. The City is seeking to ensure that their acceptance of the funds would allow them to benefit all residents while not placing the City in a liability position.

Mr. DeSantis added that HUD has indicated there is nothing preventing the City from performing acquisition and/or rehabilitation of properties. The greater issue is the location of viable properties, which would need to be purchased by the City and leased to HOPWA provider agencies. Waiting lists would be repurposed and re-prioritized to ensure that clients with the greatest risk of homelessness would receive housing.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. DeSantis explained that the Board's regular meeting room would not be available for its September 6, 2018 meeting, which falls on a Thursday. There are very few dates available on which the meeting could be rescheduled. The members agreed by consensus to cancel the September Board meeting.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was confirmed that the October Agenda would include CDBG updates on final expenditures, as well as discussion of any monies that were returned. There will also be an update on the proposed state funding, and a possible update on the CBDO application. Mr. DeSantis anticipated that the shared housing program would go before the City Commission at their second October meeting.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COMMISSION

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:45 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.]