



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

APPROVED
Meeting Minutes
City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
August 9, 2021 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers, City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

October 2020-September 2021

MEMBERS		PRESENT	ABSENT
April Kirk, Chair	P	9	0
Marisol Simon, Vice Chair	P	8	1
Pamela Aiken (via Zoom)	P	6	2
Emma Collum	A	0	2
Elizabeth Cupido	P	9	0
Christina Disbrow	P	8	1
Christi Rice	P	8	1
Shackera Scott (arr. 4:30)	P	5	3
Terra Sickler	A	6	3
Dana Somerstein	A	4	5

Staff Present

Rachel Williams, Housing and Community Development Manager
Eveline Dsouza, Senior Administrative Assistant, Housing and Community Development
Greg Chavarria, Assistant City Manager
Jamie Opperee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communication to the City Commission

Motion made by Ms. Cupido, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that a frankly worded communication is sent to the City requesting that all public participants be able to attend all future Board meetings virtually. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Motion made by Ms. Rice, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that Board members who meet the criteria be able to call in remotely with full voting rights moving forward. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

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

- 1. Quorum Requirement – As of August 1, 2021, there are 10 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Kirk called the meeting to order at 4:11 p.m. Roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY & JULY 2021

Motion made by Vice Chair Simon, seconded by Ms. Rice, to accept the minutes as written. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG – Updates and funding reappropriations

Ms. Williams reported that there were no updates at this time, as she is awaiting official confirmation from Sunshine for All with regard to the return of their funds. They have not spent any of their allocated dollars. Their contract is scheduled to expire at the end of September 2021. She recommended that the discussion of reappropriating these funds be deferred to the October 2021 meeting.

Chair Kirk requested clarification of the deadline by which these funds may be reallocated. Ms. Williams explained that there is no deadline, as these funds came from fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020. Approximately three years remain in which these dollars may be spent if reallocated. It was clarified that the funds were received by Sunshine for All, but were never expended.

V. 2020-2021 HOPWA Participants Performance Report

1. Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc.

Sharon Alveranga-Jones, representing Broward Regional Health Planning Council, Inc. (BRHPC), advised that the agency has assisted 341 unduplicated clients between October 2020 and June 2021 through the Permanent Housing Placement (PHP), Short-Term Rental, Mortgage, and Utilities (STRMU), Tenant-Based Rental Voucher (TBRV), and Temporary Emergency Hotel Voucher (TEHV) programs. They have received 426 applications to date.

90% of all clients in the PHP program report having had regular contact with their primary health care providers. In the STRMU program, there was a dramatic increase in the number of overall applications. The economic downturn and slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic have adversely affected the ability of many clients to find gainful employment. The PHP program was also affected by the pandemic, as many clients did not qualify for this assistance because they had not maintained employment for the required amount of time. Clients who live on fixed incomes cannot sustain independent living without assistance, and the cost per client is very high.

Two new clients have exited the TBRV program, one of whom became a homeowner and another who successfully reached self-sufficiency.

Chair Kirk asked if BRHPC sees the possibility for improvement in the PHP program, of if the greater need at present is for STRMU assistance. Ms. Alveranga-Jones replied

that some clients have been able to return to work, which shows slight improvement. She felt there will eventually be more positive development in the future.

2. Broward House, Inc.

Alexandra Garrison, representing Broward House, Inc., advised that the agency met its performance indicators for the Facility-Based Housing program. Clients in this program often present with a variety of issues, including substance abuse, mental health challenges, lack of medical care, chronic homelessness, and others. Broward House has not had any COVID-19 outbreaks in their facility, and six clients have moved from the facility to independent living or to another program.

As Broward County continues to decrease its COVID-19 restrictions, Broward House follows the guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) when determining what is or is not safe for clients living in their facility and for staff members. Some clients who have left the facility cannot be brought back due to safety concerns, although the agency seeks to ensure that they have somewhere to go.

Broward House receives unannounced visits from the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), and recently recognized the success of clients and the agency's practices. There have been challenges in hiring nursing staff due to the ongoing demand for nurses as well as the agency's inability to increase pay.

3. Mount Olive Development Corp.

Jacqueline Stewart, representing Mount Olive Development Corporation (MODCO), reported that the agency has been able to provide affordable and safe housing, vaccinations, and support services for their clients. Their housing is at 100% capacity and is comprised of one efficiency unit, four one-bedroom apartments, 10 two-bedroom apartments, and one four-bedroom house.

During the previous quarter, MODCO served 24 Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) clients, as well as 25 clients who were not HIV-positive but qualified for HOPWA services. They provided housing subsidies as well as assistive and support services. Clients included 29 males and 20 females of ages 18 and over. 68% of clients fell within the extremely low-income bracket, and four clients live in a shared housing environment.

MODCO has met all its performance indicators for the third quarter, including having two clients transition from the Project-Based Rental-Master Lease (PBR-ML) program to self-sufficiency. Four clients also transitioned from Project-Based Rental (PBR) to self-sufficiency.

The PBR program has expended \$178,984.30 of its allocation, while the PBR-ML program has expended \$32,416.56. MODCO has also leveraged \$336,000 and \$39,083

in additional funding and in-kind services for HOPWA clients, senior citizens, and homeless clients.

4. Sunshine Social Services, Inc. D/B/A Sunserve

Tiffany Arieagus, representing Sunserve, reported that the agency is exceeding its contractual obligations and providing housing case management services in four languages. Because its revenues do not cover the full cost of its case management programs, Sunserve has made up the difference through private fundraising. 94% of funding goes directly into case management services.

From October 2020 through June 30, 2021, the agency has served 302 clients through its main grant. They have served another 64 clients using other grant funds. 51 unduplicated clients received STRMU services, and 149 unduplicated applications were filed for an authorized amount of \$87,025. PHP housing assistance served 25 unduplicated clients and received 69 unduplicated applications for an authorized amount of \$38,679. Sunserve is on pace to expend all of its allocated funds for FY 2020-2021.

Sunserve has experienced a number of bouts with COVID-19 despite following strict safety precautions and protocol. This caused many case managers to work from home and seek medical care. They were able to maintain their quality of care for clients. A number of clients passed away due to COVID-19, and some case managers resigned due to the stress brought on by dealing with the pandemic. The agency has persevered and continues to work diligently with its clients.

5. Care Resource Community Health Centers, Inc.

Francisco Gomez, representing Care Resource Community Health Centers, Inc., stated that for the third quarter, the agency served 574 clients against a goal of 300. All 574 clients received follow-up services, and 471 clients received assistance in developing job skills and seeking employment. 364 clients of discharged clients demonstrated improvement on the vulnerability assessment scale and self-sufficiency matrix. Care Resource exceeded its goals in all of these categories.

From other grant funding of \$65,000, Care Resource has served 69 clients against a goal of 75. They also achieved 100% success in having clients create a monthly budget, seeking employment, and building job skills. A total of 643 clients were served in the third quarter. Care Resource has also provided COVID-19 vaccinations to all clients who wished to be vaccinated.

Rafael Jimenez, also representing Care Resource, advised that the agency continued to deliver services during the ongoing pandemic, including medication assistance treatment programs, telehealth services for both medical and behavioral health, and

case management services. They have embarked upon a needle exchange program for the community at large in Broward County.

Mr. Jimenez continued that Care Resource's award for FY 2020-2021 was for \$262,000, as well as a separate amount of \$65,000 for a two-year period. The \$262,000 was for a total contractual agreement of 300 clients at \$873.33 per client. In the third quarter, the agency has almost doubled this goal by serving 574 clients. This provided 52% greater efficiency for every dollar provided, with \$456.44 per client.

The \$65,000 award was intended to serve 75 clients by contractual agreement. Thus far in the third quarter, Care Resource has served 69 clients. The use of these funds, however, was (-8%), which was related to staffing recoupment during the last round of funding. The agency brought new staff on board in November, which lowered efficiency during the training period.

6. Legal Aid Service of Broward

Edwin Cordova, representing Legal Aid Service of Broward, advised that the agency's report reflects numbers of unduplicated clients. Many clients served by Legal Aid were also seen earlier in the year. He explained that the real estate market in South Florida has become even more expensive, which has increased the needs of clients who cannot meet their rental or payment obligations. Clients in various service industries, who have been unable to work from their homes, are struggling.

The result has been that many Legal Aid clients are returning to the agency for services. Legal Aid has obtained additional grant funds from various organizations to help meet these needs. Most of Legal Aid's work has focused on obtaining rental assistance for their clients.

Mr. Cordova continued that the amount expended on clients does not match the award amount: by the time Legal Aid has concluded execution of agreements or other services for clients, they have worked with those clients for a number of months. They do not bill the City for services that have not yet been completed.

Chair Kirk asked if the delay in contracts is normal or the result of additional delays in FY 2020-2021. Ms. Dsouza clarified that part of the delay was caused by a later allocation of additional funding. The agency is on track to expend all of its funds.

Chair Kirk commended all six HOPWA organizations, acknowledging that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is significantly affecting the populations they serve in relation to health, housing, and employment. It is also placing additional stress on the agencies' employees. She requested any additional input that the agencies felt the Board should hear.

Mr. Jimenez of Care Resource stated that the Delta variant of COVID-19 has led the agency to reevaluate its COVID-19 protocols. One issue that arose was the need for external team meetings to continue if possible, using a telecommunications platform. They are also working to limit the number of staff who work at the health center: employees who can work remotely are encouraged to do so. They are striving to provide adequate social distance as well.

Chair Kirk noted that the pandemic appears to be resurgent at a time when it was once expected to be coming to an end, and concluded that the Board hopes to be able to support the agencies appropriately.

VI. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ms. Dsouza noted that Assistant City Manager Greg Chavarria was present at the meeting.

Chair Kirk recalled that at the July 2021 meeting, Turnstone Development had been asked to provide a more comprehensive update. Ms. Williams advised that no one from Turnstone was present at this time. She noted that the discrepancy with their billing may have resulted from their quarterly billing schedule. Turnstone was contacted and asked to address this, and their billing has since become current. They have expended all of their funds.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

IX. COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY COMMISSION

Chair Kirk stated that based on the feedback from HOPWA providers, as well as the ongoing pandemic within the community, she would like to further discuss how to proceed with Community Services Board (CSB) meetings. She pointed out that the population served by this Board and the provider agencies does not benefit from in-person meetings while the Delta variant of COVID-19 continues to spread. She also noted that the Board met successfully in a virtual environment for 18 months, during which time they allocated substantial funding to community agencies.

Chair Kirk recalled that the July meeting did not have a quorum, and members had requested virtual participation in August as well. The process for virtual participation requires that members meet a number of criteria, including requesting virtual access within a set time frame. Members participating virtually are typically not allowed to vote.

Chair Kirk continued that she is requesting to send a communication to the City Commission that the CSB be granted the opportunity to allow its organizations, members of the community, and Board members to meet virtually, with full voting rights, in order to continue their work until such time as it becomes safe to meet in person once more.

Ms. Cupido asked if City Staff has heard any updates or similar feedback from other organizations. Ms. Williams replied that the most recent update is that advisory bodies are to continue meeting in person, based upon how direction from the Governor's Office has been reviewed and translated by City attorneys.

Ms. Disbrow pointed out that one unique aspect of the CSB is its service to vulnerable populations, which she felt should be taken into consideration even if other City advisory bodies have not requested a return to meeting via telecommunication services. She added that she had requested virtual attendance at the Board's July meeting; however, because her request was not made within the required time frame, it was denied and she could not attend. She felt this was a disservice to herself, the Board, and the agencies reporting at that meeting.

Ms. Disbrow concluded that even if the Board members are required to be physically present, she felt it would be reasonable to allow provider agencies to attend virtually. Chair Kirk also expressed concern with the burden placed on the community by in-person meetings, and emphasized the importance of feedback and updates from provider agencies.

Motion made by Ms. Cupido, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that a frankly worded communication is sent to the City requesting that all public participants be able to attend all future Board meetings virtually.

Ms. Cupido also noted that this is a reasonable request and should not require multiple layers of approval.

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

Motion made by Ms. Rice, seconded by Ms. Disbrow, that Board members who meet the criteria be able to call in remotely with full voting rights moving forward. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tierra Smith, representing Prevention Central, recalled that earlier in the year this organization applied for a nonprofit grant under the Social Welfare and Elderly program. They have not yet received a response regarding this application. Chair Kirk noted that this request was presented to the City's Budget Advisory Board (BAB), which oversees the City's general support grants. She added that the CSB has previously discussed assisting the BAB in this process, as they have greater experience in the management and allocation of grant funds.

VIII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

It was noted that the Board will continue to discuss reallocation of CDBG funds at the September 2021 meeting. They would also review 2022 meeting dates.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 5:29 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.]