City of Fort Lauderdale
Community Services Board
January 12, 2015 – 4:00 P.M.
City Commission Chambers – City Hall
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

		October 2014-September 2015	
MEMBERS		**PRESENT**	**ABSENT**
Wendy Gonsher, Chair	P	3	0
Benjamin Bean	P	3	0
Mark Fillers	P	3	0
Wanda Francis	P	3	0
Gwendolyn Haynes	P	1	1
Jason King	A	2	1
Chris Lovell (arr. 4:12)	P	3	0
Fred Roccanti	P	3	0
Gabe Sheffield	A	0	2
Jasmin Shirley	P	3	0
Noah Szugajew	P	1	0
Joseph S. Van de Bogart	P	2	0

Staff Present
Mario DeSantis, Liaison and Housing Administrator
Jonathan Brown, Housing and Community Development Manager
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None.

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

- **Quorum Requirement – As of January 5, 2015, there are 12 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 constitutes a quorum**

Chair Gonsher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and roll was called. It was noted that a quorum was present.

II. WELCOME / BOARD AND STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

New members Gwendolyn Haynes and Noah Szugajew introduced themselves at this time. Ms. Haynes is a lifetime resident of Fort Lauderdale and an educator. Mr. Szugajew is a member of the Broward County Housing Authority.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 17, 2014

Motion made by Ms. Francis, seconded by Mr. Roccanti, to approve the November minutes. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. CDBG

- **Program Requirements – FY 15/16**

Mr. Brown explained that the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) process for fiscal year (FY) 2015-16 has begun, with requests expected to come before the Board in March or April. The Board will also review Housing Opportunities for Persons with HIV/AIDS (HOPWA) proposals in 2015. He asked if the Board wished to make any changes to the CDBG categories or minimum and maximum funding awards, as well as the possibility of accepting electronic applications rather than paper copies.

The Board reviewed the CDBG categories, including Recreation, which Ms. Shirley noted has funded beneficial programs, such as swim classes, in the past. There was also discussion of agencies "shopping" for categories in which there was the least amount of competition. Chair Gonsher noted that the Board typically funds the highest-scoring agency in each category, and suggested that they might instead fund the highest-scoring agencies overall without respect to categories.

Mr. Lovell arrived at 4:12 p.m.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers to proceed with Economic Empowerment, Educational Program, Emergency Food and Shelter, [and] not do Grassroots, Health Care and Substance Abuse would remain, not do Recreation, and leave the category Other to pick up all those unique things that come up.

The **motion** died for lack of second.

Motion made by Mr. Bean, seconded by Ms. Shirley, to keep all of the categories as is for the next funding cycle.

Mr. Bean clarified that the category of Other is intended to serve grassroots organizations that provide community services but do not fall within any of the prescribed categories. Chair Gonsher cited Legal Aid of Broward County as an applicant within the Other category.

In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 8-2 (Chair Gonsher and Mr. Fillers dissenting).

The Board moved on to minimum and maximum funding amounts, which in the past have been between $5000 and $50,000 respectively. Mr. Brown noted that due to program amendments allowing some agencies to carry over their unused funds, the maximum amount has been exceeded in the past. He added that the City Manager has indicated he would like to set aside funding to address homelessness in the coming

fiscal year, which would affect CDBG public service dollars. He noted that if this issue is addressed through a City Department, it is not clear at this time whether or not the City Manager will allow that Department to go through the existing application process.

Mr. Brown continued that the City Manager may work with other organizations, such as Neighborhood Support, rather than City Departments. He advised that he did not know if the City Manager would require Neighborhood Support to submit an application for CDBG funds, or if these funds would be set aside for the organization. In addition, it is not yet known what the City's CDBG allocation will be, although the total public services amount is estimated at $140,000.

Ms. Francis asserted that the Board had made a decision the previous year to require City entities to go through the application process for federal funds. Chair Gonsher noted, however, that the Board acts in an advisory capacity to the City Commission, and it is within the Commission's purview to allocate funds as they wish. It was suggested that the City be asked to participate in the application process rather than setting aside funds for other programs. Mr. Brown clarified that the City Manager has not advised him of the amount of funds he may wish to set aside.

Motion made by Ms. Shirley, seconded by Mr. Fillers, that the Board remain with their caps at maximum $50,000 and allow for the flexibility with discussions as they become apparent.

Mr. Lovell proposed the following **amendment** to the **motion**: that the cap be $50,000 but not to exceed 30% of the total funding. Ms. Shirley accepted the **amendment** with Mr. Lovell as **second**. It was noted that organizations may not be aware of the total CDBG allocation at the time they apply for funds.

Ms. Shirley restated her **motion** as follows: to remain at the $50,000 max, with the caveat of [a] potential cap of 30% of the total dollars, whichever is less. In a roll call vote, the **motion** passed 6-4 (Chair Gonsher, Mr. Bean, Mr. Fillers, and Mr. Szugajew dissenting).

The Board discussed the possibility of accepting electronic applications rather than paper copies. Mr. Fillers asserted that this would make it more difficult for the Board members to determine if all the required information is present. He also noted that electronic applications would mean the individual Board members must print their own copies for review. Mr. Van de Bogart pointed out, however, that allowing agencies to submit applications electronically could make the process less expensive for them. Mr. Bean recommended allowing individual members to choose between printed and electronic applications.

Motion made by Mr. Fillers, seconded by Mr. Roccanti, that the Board stay as they are today. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed 8-2 (Mr. Bean and Ms. Haynes dissenting).

Motion made by Mr. Bean, seconded by Mr. Lovell, to modify the procedure for distribution of the applications to the Board members so that each Board member has the choice as to whether they would like to receive their application in a hard copy or electronic form. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Chair Gonsher requested an update regarding whether or not site visits to HOPWA agencies are allowed. Mr. DeSantis explained that while he has not yet received a formal reply, there is no legal prohibition of Board members from making unofficial site visits. Mr. Brown recommended that members who wish to make these visits do so before the HOPWA RFP is released and the procurement process begins. The RFP is expected to be released on January 26, 2015.

Mr. DeSantis continued that a HOPWA 101 meeting would be held in February in order to educate new Board members about the HOPWA process.

V. GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Brown reported that the City Manager has expressed interest in exploring the possibility of having another organization administer HOPWA rather than having the City continue to administer the program, and has requested that Staff prepare information for him on this topic. He explained that the City Manager has questioned why the City is administering a County-wide program.

The Board discussed this issue, with Chair Gonsher noting that the Board has worked to become knowledgeable about HOPWA. Mr. Lovell expressed concern that the City may attempt to move oversight of affordable housing out of Fort Lauderdale as well. Mr. Brown clarified that this does not seem to be the current goal. Ms. Shirley emphasized that surveillance information shows that most AIDS cases in the area occur within six to seven Fort Lauderdale ZIP codes, and that most of the program's infrastructure, including providers, exists within central Fort Lauderdale.

Chair Gonsher agreed that the program should remain stable in order to best meet the needs of its participants. Ms. Francis added that a change could prove to be a risk for participants in the program as well as the agencies who provide HOPWA services.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

VII. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

In addition to the HOPWA 101 presentation, which will be held immediately prior to the regular February Board meeting, Mr. Brown advised that he would provide a summary of the response to the CDBG application process.

Mr. DeSantis stated that with regard to the HOPWA process, it is likely that two to three meeting dates will be necessary in May 2015: one to review the grants and another to discuss specific funding for the agencies. He will provide these dates at the February meeting.

Chair Gonsher requested that the conflict of interest policy be thoroughly clarified prior to the procurement process. Mr. Brown replied that he would ask the attorney for the Housing and Community Development Department to attend the February meeting in order to address any questions on this or other legal considerations.

Chair Gonsher provided a brief overview of the CDBG grant process for the new Board members, and requested that dates for this process be discussed at the next meeting as well.

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 5:19 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.]