

**City of Palm Bay, Florida**  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Regular Meeting 2024-10**

Held on Wednesday, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 2024, at City Hall Council Chambers, 120 Malabar Road SE, Palm Bay, Florida.

This meeting was properly noticed pursuant to law; the minutes are on file in the Housing and Community Development Division Office, City Hall Annex, Palm Bay, Florida.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Thibert at approximately 6:03 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:**

<b>CHAIRPERSON:</b>	Rebecca Thibert	Present
<b>VICE-CHAIRPERSON:</b>	Dawn Bittar	Present
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Alfred Agarie	Present
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Donny Felix	Absent
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Robert Good	Absent
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Jamie Hirzel	Absent
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Henry Morin	Present
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Shenielle Walker	Present
<b>MEMBER:</b>	Dr. Deborah Livingston	Present
<b>BOARD ATTORNEY:</b>	Rodney Edwards	Present

**STAFF MEMBERS:**

Clinton Hatcher, Community & Economic Development Director; Ibis Berardi, Assistant Director of Community & Economic Development; Denise Carter, Housing Administrator; and Carmen Journey, Board Secretary.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES:**

- 1. Regular Meeting 2024-06; June 12, 2024**
- 2. Regular Meeting 2024-07; July 17, 2024**

Motion by Mr. Morin, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Bittar, to adopt the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

**OLD/UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

**1. Final AHAC Priorities**

Ms. Berardi explained that the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHAC) priorities were tabled until the November 20, 2024, Board meeting. The City had major changes to the Land Development Code and staff wanted to make sure those changes were cohesive with the AHAC report.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**1. CDBG Priorities Program Year (PY) 25**

Ms. Berardi gave an overview of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) priorities listed in the five-year Consolidated Plan. In 2021, the Board requested the ability to rank the top five (5) priorities for that year which would be identified in the Request for CDBG Applications. These rankings would be given priority in addition to the priorities listed within the Five-Year Consolidated Plan for PY 24. The Board agreed to keep prior year high-ranking priorities as previously listed. The Board added Youth Services to the high-ranking list.

Staff asked the Board to rank the top five (5) CDBG public services and the top five (5) nonpublic services for PY 25 (October 1<sup>st</sup> - September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026).

Ms. Thibert and Ms. Walker concurred with how the priorities were ranked last year.

Ms. Bittar wanted to make sure that the cleanup of contaminated sites and sewage spill produced by hurricane Milton was also included in the CDBG top priorities.

Ms. Thibert clarified that the debris and sewage spill produced by hurricane Milton would fall under Water Sewer Improvements or Flood Improvements already listed on the priority list.

Dr. Livingston said that the food banks were empty due to three (3) hurricanes and felt the Board should consider the food banks as a high priority. Ms. Carter explained that an item would not necessarily be funded just because it was marked as high priority and

explained the funding process. If the City did not receive any food bank applications, this activity would not be considered for funding.

Motion by Ms. Bittar, seconded by Ms. Walker, to add the food bank as a high priority. Motion passed unanimously.

## **2. Changes to CDBG/HOME Request for Proposal (RFP) process**

Ms. Carter explained the proposed planning process changes which were designed to improve the Board funding recommendation process. The funding recommendations would be presented to City Council on projects and activities that would be included in the CDBG and the HOME Investment Partnerships Programs (HOME) 2025-2026 Action Plans.

The following instructions were provided to the Board members:

A. A proposal summary sheet would be provided in a booklet or notebook form to each Board member and would include the following information: proposal summary, numbers to be assisted, amount requested, compliance with the City's 2021-2027 Consolidated Plan, if CDBG or HOME funds leveraged additional funds, staff evaluation and previous awards from the City.

B. Should Board members want to read the entire grant applications submitted by each nonprofit, the full applications would be available for review at the Community & Economic Development Department (CED) office. Staff would be available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, to answer any questions regarding grant applications and the proposal booklet. Staff could also be reached via the office at (321) 952-3400.

C. Board members would be provided with recommendations for Public Services projects, a table with staff recommendations, as well a table to be completed to aid in ranking the public services projects. All projects should be ranked. Projects should be ranked 1-\_\_\_\_, with 1 being the highest priority.

D. Board members would be asked to submit written rankings for the public services proposals using the table submitted to each Board member no later than noon the day before the CDAB meeting. Board members may submit their rankings via email to [denise.carter@palmbayflorida.org](mailto:denise.carter@palmbayflorida.org), or hand-deliver them to the Community & Economic

Development Department. Board members may also send via postal service, but should allow sufficient time for delivery by the due date.

E. Board members would have a chance to listen to each agency submitting a proposal at the January 15, 2025, Board meeting.

F. A public meeting of the Community & Economic Development Department staff on funding recommendations for CDBG and HOME would be held on January 29, 2025, at City Hall.

G. Staff would mail the project synopsis and staff's preliminary funding recommendations to the Board members.

H. Board members could change the rankings based on discussion among members at the February 19, 2025, CDAB meeting. In the event members want to change their rankings during the meeting, staff would need extra time to recalculate the consolidated rankings.

Ms. Thibert was very excited to have more input from staff to help the Board streamline the whole process and explained that as staff dealt with the nonprofit organizations, they would have a better idea about the nonprofit organization's financial capacity, as well as any past monitoring or performance reports. If an organization was struggling to meet federal compliances, staff that worked directly with the nonprofit organizations would know more about the struggles. Ms. Bittar agreed and was excited to see how the process would proceed next year.

Ms. Thibert asked for a 5-minute limit for the agency's proposal presentation. Ms. Carter said it could be limited to three minutes.

Ms. Thibert asked if the Housing Division was going to have a meeting with the nonprofits. Ms. Carter confirmed same and said that staff planned to conduct a meeting in the future to distribute and review the RFP packages (grant applications). The technical assistance meetings would continue, especially for any new agencies applying for funding for the first time.

Motion by Ms. Thibert, seconded by Ms. Bittar, to adopt the proposed planning process changes for CDBG and HOME for 2025-2026. Motion passed unanimously.

**OTHER BOARD BUSINESS:**

## **1. Informational: Staff Report**

Ms. Thibert asked how the Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) bus voucher program was performing. Ms. Berardi responded that funds were 100% expended last year and people were receptive to the program. She said staff was waiting on the HUD certification form for the action plan and could re-start the bus voucher program.

Ms. Thibert asked the status of the awarded projects in the Public Works Department. Ms. Berardi said that staff had to wait on HUD's approval before the sidewalk construction on Eldron Boulevard could begin. Ms. Carter mentioned the Housing Division would be planning monthly meetings with Public Works and the Parks and Facilities Departments to move CDBG projects forward.

Ms. Thibert wanted to know about the scheduled training on December 18, 2024. Ms. Berardi stated no training was scheduled at this time. Ms. Carter explained that that staff was planning to present the Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) to the Board on December 18<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Berardi added that the CAPER would be presented to City Council at its meeting the next day.

Mr. Morin wanted to know how many people on the SHIP wait list would receive assistance. Ms. Berardi said it depended on how many homeowners were low income and qualified for the rehabilitation program. If an applicant did not qualify, the next applicant moved up on the list.

Ms. Bittar asked if there was a workshop to assist SHIP applicants in understanding what they needed to do to apply for Housing Rehabilitation funds. Ms. Carter said no workshop was held on the application process. Staff in charge of the SHIP program spent time and walked homeowners through the application process by telephone, e-mail, and during in person visits to the Housing Division office.

Ms. Bittar commented that there were 252 people on the wait list, which she felt was a lot, and asked if the Board could assist. Ms. Carter explained applicants were constantly added to the wait list and the City's funds were reduced along with other local governments statewide for many years. For several years, SHIP funds were redirected from the housing trust fund and moved to the State general fund budget to help the State's budget. A settlement was reached, so local governments no longer had to be concerned with SHIP funds being re-directed away from housing which consequently reduced the number of people that could be helped each year.

Ms. Thibert asked if the homeowners were prioritized on the wait list. She wanted to know if staff prioritized the projects that were a hazard for the homeowners, such as a code violation, and if those projects were moved up on the list. Ms. Carter said that homeowners were prioritized according to when the applicant was added to the waiting list. If needed, staff would prioritize a homeowner if the home was damaged during a hurricane under the City's Housing Rehabilitation Policies. The City's Housing Rehabilitation Program primarily addressed code violations and safety issues in a home.

Mr. Agarie wanted to know how many people applied for the CDBG grant. Ms. Berardi explained that the department would need to distribute the CDBG Request for Proposal (RFP) application first.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:37 p.m.

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Rebecca Thibert, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

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Carmen Journey, BOARD SECRETARY