

**Blair County Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF/Act 137) Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Blair County Courthouse: Conference Room 4B  
August 14, 2024**

**Present:** Tricia Johnson, Scott Durbin, Don Delozier, Jim Gehret, Missy Gillin, Trina Illig, Wendy Melius and Jennifer Kensinger

**Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the May 8, 2024 meeting were emailed to the Advisory Board members prior to today’s meeting.

*Jim Gehret made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Don Delozier seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

**Public Comment:** *No public comments were made.*

Missy Gillin reviewed the AHTF Current Accounts as shown below:

**Act 137 Account Balance**

Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)	Operation Safe Space 5/25/23 Approved	Team Effort Committed Meeting 3/26/24 Approved	Lead Committed Meeting 12/13/18	Owner Occupied Rehab Meeting 3/12/21 3/28/24 Approved	1 <sup>st</sup> Time Homebuyer Commissioner Meetings 4/5/22, 5/5/22, 5/12/22, 5/27/22, 12/14/23 4/30/24	Sustainable Housing Program	Code Compliance Repair Assistance Program 5/14/2024 Approved	TOTAL
Allocation	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$3,000	\$150,000	\$50,000	
Paid Out as of	-\$20,000	\$0	- \$49,726.20	-\$22,216.51	-\$18,000	-\$50,000	\$0	
<b>Program Available BALANCE 7/31/24</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$20,000.00</b>	<b>\$273.80</b>	<b>\$27,783.49</b>	<b>-\$3,000</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$198,057.29</b>

**AHTF Bank Statement Balance of 07/31/2024: \$396,043.37**

**AHTF Committed Pending Payments: \$198,057.29**

**AHTF Available Non-Committed Funds: \$197,986.08**

<b>AHTF Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest)</b>	
June 2023	\$7,176
July 2023	\$7,735
August 2023	\$6,799
September 2023	\$7,150
October 2023	\$6,825
November 2023	\$6,591
December 2023	\$6,682
January 2024	\$5,941
February 2024	\$4,875
March 2024	\$4,420
April 2024	\$5,629
May 2024	\$6,253
June 2024	\$6,682
July 2024	\$6,396

### **Demo Fund Current Account**

<b>Demolition Fund Bank Statement 7/31/24</b>	<b>\$404,102.49</b>
<b>Demolition Projects Committed Not Paid</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Demolition Program Funds Available Non-committed</b>	<b>\$404,102.49</b>
<b>Pending Board Approval</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

### ***Blight/Demolition Fund***

- Missy included a list of approved demolitions in the agenda packet.
- There are not any pending projects.
- All projects are completed and paid.

### ***Blight/Demolition Fund Discussion***

- Trina led off the discussion noting that during the last meeting Commissioner Webster stated that she wanted to review the demolition guidelines with the current solicitor to get their input on the process and definition of site control. At this time, there has not been any word if the solicitor reviewed the guidelines.
- Trina feels that the demo guidelines need to be modified. Trina stated that the \$10,000 cap on the county funding for demo is not adequate and that a municipal match is unrealistic.
- Trina said that two conditions of Act 152 cannot be changed:
  1. The State definition of blight
  2. Funding is only available to municipalities/counties, but not the private sector.
- However, county guidelines can be tweaked.
- Trina reported, as of April, there were 42, possibly more now, trailers on the county repository. These trailers are most likely not salvageable.

### **Issues with Trailers on the Repository:**

- Trailers are titled, not deeded, so would need to identify correct trailer.
  - Trailers are either on rented lots in a mobile home park or sitting on private property, which is not owned by the trailer owner.
  - Tax Claim has a few trailers on the repository that are on private property and the property owners are calling Tax Claim asking for them to remove the trailer.
  - Trina stated that it would need to be confirmed that the trailer is vacant.
  - Majority of the trailers on the repository are in mobile home parks and Trina is concerned that these trailers are actually occupied despite being county owned, due to failure of paying taxes on the trailer. Trina explained that the trailer park owner pays taxes on the ground, but the owner of the trailer pays taxes on the trailer. The trailer park owner is not responsible for paying the taxes on trailer. In Trina's experience, many of these trailers, abandoned in trailer parks by their previous owner, are being rented out to people by the trailer park owner.
  - Water/sewer source would have to be capped. If a septic tank is in use, it would have to be pumped and crushed.
  - Discussions continued with how the county needs to address trailers in mobile home parks that on the repository, since most likely the trailer park owner is renting them out when they do not have the rights to do so.
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- Trina said that it would need to be added to the guidelines when a municipal lien would be used and when it would be waived.
  - Trina shared pictures of a property located in Allegheny Township (2119 Mill Road, Duncansville). Owners are deceased, making the property a vacant, deteriorating, public nuisance. Allegheny Township would have to go through the codes process. Trina feels this would qualify for the demo funds with a municipal lien. A municipal lien would be the entire cost of the demolition. Allegheny Township does not want to have to match funds to have the structure demolished.
  - Scott suggested lowering the municipality match percentage and Trina suggested eliminating the match altogether because there is not anything in the law stating that the municipality has to have any matching funds.
  - Further discussions ensued regarding how the county should deal with trailers on the repository that are in trailer parks. Trina said that the county does have a process, but she is not sure how it is enforced.
  - Trina says she gets calls from trailer owners, who need rehab, and she is not able to do it, but Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is coming out with a program called Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement (PRICE) to assist with manufactured homes.
  - Trina feels a process needs to be developed to assist with the demolition of the trailers on the county repository.

- The addresses of four of the trailers on the repository that Tax Claim would like demo funding for are:
  - **420 Hilltop Road, Claysburg (Greenfield Township) Private Property**
  - **153 Chevrolet Drive, Claysburg (Greenfield Township) (Mobile Home Park)**
  - **109 Fleetwood Court, East Freedom (Mobile Home Park)**
  - **138 Lazy Hollow Lane, Duncansville – Private Property**

*Jim Gehret made a motion for 2 trailers on the county repository located at 420 Hilltop Road, Claysburg, PA & 138 Lazy Hollow Lane, Duncansville, PA to be recommended for the demo funding since they meet the definition of blight and to recommend to the commissioners to approve this action once updated demo guidelines are created by Trina Illig and approved by the county commissioners. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.*

- Trina will work on developing updated guidelines/processes to submit to the commissioners for their input and approval.
- The other properties listed: 153 Chevrolet Drive, Claysburg and 109 Fleetwood Court, East Freedom are located in mobile home parks and more discussion is needed on how the process should be for these properties.
- Further action has been tabled on the private property located at 2119 Mill Road, Duncansville (Allegheny Township) until the Board finds out if guidelines can be modified to do a municipal lien in lieu of a municipal match.
- Don suggested modifying the demo guidelines stating that any demo that exceeds \$10,000 must be approved.
- Trina will work on updated guidelines and submit to the commissioners via email.
- Scott asked for Trina to email him the definition of “site control”.
- Trina read the current guidelines stating that the municipalities have to use some of their own funding for the demo that it cannot be fully funded by the county demo fund. Again, there is no defined municipality match percentage.

## **Program Updates**

### *First Time Home Buyer Program (Wendy Melius)*

- Wendy did not have any updates.

### *Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program (Wendy/Trina)*

- Wendy and Trina need to have another meeting to discuss this further. There needs to be more consistency. Wendy suggested having a monthly meeting to review projects.

### *Operation Safe Space (Wendy Melius)*

- Wendy stated that there is a meeting this Friday to discuss Operation Safe Space.
- Wendy is to look at Center for Community Action’s funding to see if it can be used for this initiative.
- Trish does not believe that Operation Safe Space really fits with the definition of the mission of the AHTF, but if a motion is made by the AHTF to allocate money to it that it would have to be taken to the commissioners to see if they feel it aligns with the AHTF.

### *Homeless Family Shelter Update (Lisa Hann)*

- Shelter Update (Email update submitted by Lisa Hann):
  - 30 total individuals in the shelter (5 men, 10 women & 15 children/1 Vet)
  - 508 individuals served since opening on 2/20/2023
  - 12 emergency overnight stays since opening on 2/20/2023
  - 0 Intakes scheduled this week
  - 0 No Shows
  - 0 cancellation of Intakes
  - 13 cancellations of referrals – Reasons: no contact for 90 days, no longer needed, received new updated referrals
  - 0 Successful discharges with housing
  - 1 Self resolved discharge with housing
  - 2 Reached maximum time discharges – JB, DH – did not find housing
  - 2 Extensions approved – A, B-S, K R
- 1 apartment, above the shelter, is vacant.

### **Other Programs:**

#### *Lead Abatement Program (Trina Illig)*

- Missy stated that Trina is working with a client who needs relocated from her current housing due to her infant having high lead levels.

#### *Owner Occupied Rehab – Trina Illig*

- No updates.

#### *TEAMeffort – Scott Durbin*

- Scott reported that TEAMeffort wrapped up their stay the end of July. Beginning in June, approximately 750 campers were in the Blair County over a seven-week time period to do light construction work, repairs, lawn maintenance and landscaping. It was well-organized.
- Scott would like to help next year with getting better lawn equipment for the campers to use.

#### *Sustainable Housing Program – Missy Gillin*

- Missy reported that the two-year period for the funding to be expended for the Sustainable Housing program will end in September 2024.
- Greg Werstil was unable to use the \$50,000 for his project.
- Susan Bonsell, successfully, used the \$50,000 for two projects in Tyrone. Susan Bonsell has been completely paid.
- Missy is to reopen the application process for the Sustainable Housing Program. \$100,000 in funding remains available.
- Sustainable Housing Program funding will remain at \$50,000 per applicant.

### ***Blair County Code Compliance Repair Assistance Program***

- Missy stated that the program has had several applicants, but the biggest hold up is getting contractors to return calls to be able to get bids for the work.
- One applicant also qualifies for Trina's Lead Program.
- Some applicants do not meet the income guidelines or want to submit their income verification.
- Applications are being submitted without the required two bids.
- Painters are needed and some names given were Burk's Painting, Josh Roland and Ray Rettig.

### ***Open Discussion***

- Scott stated that his company is closing, today, on the Lexington Avenue project. To meet Zoning, they had to change from apartments to townhouses.
- Trish stated that Blair HealthChoices bought the Sun Valley Motel to use as emergency housing.
- Wendy reported that Center for Community Action (CCA) is trying to work with the jail system on their re-entry housing.
- Wendy stated that they are deeding a lot, owned by Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP), back to the City of Altoona to possibly be used a green space.

### **Next Steps:**

Revisit Demolition Fund Guidelines/Demo Projects

Status of the Sustainable Housing Program application process

Names of any contractors willing to do small projects.

Missy thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 13, 2024** at 8:15am in Conference Room 4B