

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

Present: Tricia Johnson, Commissioner Webster, Scott Durbin, Don Delozier, Jim Gehret, Missy Gillin, Jean Puskar, Trina Illig, Betsy Nelson, Wendy Melius, Diana Dick, Lisa Hann and Jennifer Kensingler

Self-Introductions were made.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the December 13, 2023 meeting were emailed to the Advisory Board members prior to today’s meeting.

Jim Gehret made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Scott 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 3/2/23 Approved	Lead Committed Meeting 12/13/18	Owner Occupied Rehab Meeting 3/12/21	1 st Time Homebuyer Commissioner Meetings 4/5/22, 5/5/22, 5/12/22, 5/27/22, 12/14/23	Sustainable Housing Program	TOTAL
Allocation	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$50,000	\$50,000 8/18/2022	\$3,000	\$150,000	
Paid Out as of 1/31/24	-\$20,000	-\$15,000	-\$49,726.20	-\$50,000	-\$15,000	-\$37,225.04	
Program Available BALANCE 1/31/24	\$0	\$0.00	\$273.80	\$0	\$0	\$112,774.96	\$113,048.76

AHTF Bank Statement Balance of 01/31/2024: \$398,428.51

AHTF Committed Pending Payments: \$113,048.076

AHTF Available Non-Committed Funds: \$285,379.75

AHTF Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest)	
January 2023	\$7,527
February 2023	\$4,849
March 2023	\$4,680
April 2023	\$5,954
May 2023	\$5,772
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

Demo Fund Current Account

Demolition Fund Bank Statement 1/31/24	\$355,141.23
Demolition Projects Committed Not Paid	\$0
Demolition Program Funds Available Non-committed	\$355,141.23
Pending Board Approval	\$0.00

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.
- Trina spoke with Nathan Karn, County Solicitor, about the guidelines for the demolition fund. The guidelines specify that the municipality has to have site control of the property, which does not mean ownership. Trina explained that if a municipality has gone through the codes violation process and orders a demolition of the property and the owner cannot afford to do it that the municipality could take site control and qualify for the demolition funding.
- Trina stated that trailers on the repository are an issue. Policies and procedures need to be established to address properties that have hit the repository. There would need to be a separate process for repository properties that have individuals residing in them. Once policies and procedures are defined, Trina stated that code enforcement officers would need to be contacted to see how the demo funding could help them with blight.
- Commissioner Webster asked how the demolition funding would be recouped when used by a municipality using site control to demolish a property. Trina stated that a lien would be filed. In Trina’s experience, in that case, the homeowner usually stops paying taxes and

the property goes back on the repository and then it would be a municipal lien, which would be cleared.

- Commissioner Webster questioned if it would be possible for someone to go the property owner and ask them to convey the property to the municipality. Trina stated that the majority of municipalities do not want ownership of the properties.

Program Updates

First Time Home Buyer Program (Wendy)

- Wendy stated since Center for Community Action (CCA) is overseeing Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) that there has been (1) one award in the First Time Home Buyer Program. Wendy added that they are restructuring the program and getting more individuals certified to help with the program.
- Tricia asked that Social Services staff be informed, as soon as possible, when someone completes the program, so that the request for the \$3,000 award can be put on the commissioners' meeting agenda for their approval of the allocation.

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program (Wendy)

- Wendy Melius stated that there were 22 (twenty-two) deferrals.
- Wendy is meeting with Trina, after this meeting, to talk about weatherization and the Whole Home program.

Operation Safe Space (Tricia)

- Program has no funding at this time.

Homeless Family Shelter Update (Lisa Hann)

- Current Data:
 - 21 individuals in the shelter (6 men, 4 women & 11 children)
 - 319 individuals served since opening (206 adults and 113 children)
 - 10 emergency overnight stays
 - 7 intakes scheduled
 - 5 no shows last week
 - No veterans
 - No emergency placements
 - 11 scheduled discharges
 - 1 apartment vacancy

Lisa expressed concern for funding for Shelter operations. Funding sources that she was counting on fell through. Lisa is to talk with Wendy Melius in regards to applying for Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) funds.

Housing Task Force & Hope for the Homeless (Lisa)

- Lisa stated that the Housing Task Force & Hope for the Homeless groups have merged. The group meets monthly.

Warming Center Update (Tricia)

- Averaging 21 individuals nightly

- Area agencies like BDAP & Crisis have a staff member volunteer to help engage individuals to see if they have a need for treatment or services.
- The warming center will continue to operate until March 31, 2024. At this time, there are no plans to keep the warming center open beyond that date.
- Lisa stated that a family that showed up at the warming center was placed in the vacant apartment behind the Teen Center. Lisa is allowing them to stay for 30 (thirty) days and if they have not found other living arrangements within that timeframe, she will probably extend the stay.

Other Programs:

Lead Abatement Program (Trina Illig)

- Trina stated that 13 units are being worked on in Lead Abatement program.
- 9 applications that were received for the Whole Home program were moved to the Lead Abatement program to do a risk assessment, because the properties were identified as being built before 1978. In addition to, there were children under the age of 6 living in those homes.

Owner Occupied Rehab – Trina Illig

- Trina reported that a sewer replacement is on hold due to lack of funds.
- Wait list for non-entitlements is five (5) to six (6) years.
- Trina needs more funding allocated to this program.

Whole Home Program – Trina Illig

- Trina reported that the Whole Home (WH) program has received ninety-two (92) applications. One (1) unit has been completed and One (1) unit has been closed.
- Trina stated that she is still working with the City of Altoona on how to allocate WH funds to them.
- Trina also consults with BCCAP's weatherization program.

TEAMeffort – Scott Durbin

- Scott reported that all is moving forward with TEAMeffort for the Summer of 2024.
- Scott stated that Davis Ellis has a list of some properties that are in need of some minor repairs that perhaps TEAMeffort can do.
- At a future Commissioners' meeting, Scott will share the video that was produced last summer highlighting some of the work TEAMeffort did. During that meeting, the Commissioners will be asked for the final approval of the funds allocated to TEAMeffort from AFTF in the amount of \$20,000 to do light construction work in Blair County during the summer of 2024.
- The presentation to the Commissioners will be either on March 12 or March 19, 2024. Scott is to let Missy know which date will work better.

Sustainable Housing Program – Missy Gillin

Greg Werstil Project Update – Greenfield Township, Claysburg

- No further updates from Greg Werstil
- Scott or Missy is to reach out to Greg to see if he intends to create affordable housing with the \$50,000 awarded to him for the project. If he is unable to do that, then he would no longer be eligible for the award.

Cornerstone Builders & Supplies (Susan Bonsell) Project Update – 1310 Washington Ave, Tyrone & 612 Park Ave, Tyrone

- Susan Bonsell's projects are underway. She has until 2025 to complete the projects. Susan submitted one invoice for a partial payment, which was approved and paid.

Board Member Renewals (Terms Expire 4/30/2024):

Scott Durbin

Don Delozier

Sue Eberhart

Tricia asked Scott and Don if they would like to continue to serve on the Board. Both stated that they would like to remain as Board Members. Sue Eberhart was not in attendance, but answered via email that she would like to continue as a Board Member, too. A county talent bank application must be filled out and submitted to the Commissioners to be approved for reappointment. Jen will email an application out to them.

Emergency Repairs/Code Violations – Tricia, Trina, Missy & Scott

- Tricia stated, due to hectic schedules, a sub-committee was not formed to discuss the details of the proposed, income eligible, Emergency Repairs/Code Violations program.
- Trina added that questions still remain as to how the money will be used, who will get the money, who administers the program or if the program will be merged with an existing program?
- Tricia stated that it was discussed at the last meeting that the funding would be administered elsewhere, but the projects would be approved through AHTF.
- Scott does not want to allocate the funding strictly for use to address code violations. He would like it to be available to individuals who may get property citations.
- Scott reiterated that this program would be for income-eligible homeowners only.
- Tricia stated that the process and procedures need to be established so that there is no need for the commissioners to approve each application.
- Scott is to get a couple letters from some area municipalities in support of the program.
- Tricia asked for Trina to send her a copy of her owner-occupied application.
- The group decided to vote separately on funding for the Owner Occupied Housing Rehab Program and the Emergency Repairs/Codes Violations Program.

Owner Occupied Rehab:

- ***Don Delozier made the motion to allocate \$50,000 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) to the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program. Jim Gehret seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

Emergency Repairs/Code Violations Program:

- *Scott made a motion to recommend to the commissioners to approve an allocation of funds from the AHTF in the amount of \$50,000 with a cap of \$5,000 per application/project to be administered through the Emergency Repairs/Code Violations Program. Don Delozier seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.*

Next Steps:

- TEAMeffort presentation at the Commissioners' meeting either March 12 or March 19.
- Set-up meeting to discuss and define the Emergency Repair/Code Violation Program procedures/policies.

Missy thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

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