

**Blair County Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF/Act 137) Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Blair County Courthouse: Conference Room 4B
May 8, 2024**

Present: Tricia Johnson, Commissioner Webster, Scott Durbin, Don Delozier, Jim Gehret, Missy Gillin, Trina Illig, Jodi Williams, Lisa Hann and Jennifer Kensinger

Self-Introductions were made.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the February 14, 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. Scott Durbin 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	1 st 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	TOTAL
Allocation	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$50,000	\$50,000 8/18/2022 3/28/24	\$3,000	\$150,000	
Paid Out as of	-\$20,000	\$20,000	-\$49,726.20	\$50,000	-\$18,000	-\$37,225.04	
Program Available BALANCE 3/31/24	\$0	\$20,000.00	\$273.80	\$50,000	-\$3,000	\$112,774.96	\$183,048.76

AHTF Bank Statement Balance of 03/31/2024: \$403,003.25

AHTF Committed Pending Payments: \$183,048.76

AHTF Available Non-Committed Funds: \$219,954.49

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
February 2024	\$4,875
March 2024	\$4,420

Demo Fund Current Account

Demolition Fund Bank Statement 3/31/24	\$368,723.02
Demolition Projects Committed Not Paid	\$0
Demolition Program Funds Available Non-committed	\$368,723.02
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.

Program Updates

First Time Home Buyer Program (Jodi Williams)

- Jodi reported that there is a closing this Friday. The \$3,000 award has been approved by the Commissioners.
- Missy stated that Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) is to get an administrative fee for each 1st Time Home Buyer application that is processed. BCCAP invoiced the AHTF for \$150.00, but it cannot be paid until a motion is passed by the Board recommending the Commissioners approve a set fee for each application processed by BCCAP.

- ***Jim Gehret made a motion to approve an allocation of \$150.00 per application from the AHTF to be paid to Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) for an administrative processing fee for the 1st Time Home Buyer Program. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program (Jodi/Trina)

- CCA/BCCAP has deferred weatherization/housing rehab requests to Trina Illig, who is using the Owner-Occupied Rehab funding for these projects. This funding is used county wide.

Operation Safe Space (Jodi Williams)

- Program has no funding at this time.

Homeless Family Shelter Update (Lisa Hann)

- Current Data:
 - 18 individuals in the shelter (4 men, 10 women & 4 children/No Vets)
 - 394 individuals served since opening (259 adults and 135 children)
 - 10 emergency overnight stays
 - 1 intake scheduled today
 - 3 successful discharges
 - 10 involuntary discharges
 - 3 extensions denied (Did not meet criteria.)
 - 1 apartment is vacant due to an eviction, but needs cleaned and renovated until it can be advertised.
- A common occurrence, at the shelter, is individuals just walking out and not returning.
- Family Services has the capability to text individuals now.

Hope for the Homeless (Lisa)

- The next Hope for the Homeless meeting is Friday, May 10, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Other Programs:

Lead Abatement Program (Trina Illig)

- Trina stated that there are 14 active units, 9 of which came from the Whole Home program.

Owner Occupied Rehab – Trina Illig

- Project 1: sewer lateral
- Project 2: code violation
\$29,000 out of \$50,000 in funds remain.

TEAMeffort – Scott Durbin

- Scott reported that approximately 760 TEAMeffort campers will be here to do light construction work/repairs during the summer (2nd week of June through the end of July). Justin Jones, TEAMeffort leader, will be staying in Blair County during that time.
- In addition to the \$20,000 allocated from the AHTF, Habitat for Humanity is contributing \$30,000 for supplies.

Sustainable Housing Program – Missy Gillin

Greg Werstil Project Update – Greenfield Township, Claysburg

- No further updates from Greg Werstil
- Scott stated that he spoke with Greg and that he still planned to use the \$50,000 to create affordable housing.

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

- No updates on these projects.

The award recipients have until 2025 to finish their projects.

- Scott suggested sending a letter to Greg Werstil and to Susan Bonsell asking for updates on their projects.
- The AHTF members agreed that the remaining \$50,000 of the Sustainable Housing Program should be advertised again to get new applicants.
- Missy to review the application and change the submission date.
- Possibly advertise in the newspaper. Scott and Don talked of letting their associates know about the program.
- Date to submit application would be August 1, 2024.
- No motion is needed by the Board since this program was already approved.
- Commissioners would need to approve the application selected by the AHTF.

Blair County Code Compliance Repair Assistance Program

- Missy included a draft copy of the guidelines and application for the code compliance program.
- Missy stated that the county solicitor did review them and stated that when the new income guidelines are released that that information would need to be updated in the application.
- Packets will be available at the Township/Municipalities buildings and City of Altoona Codes office.
- It will be the responsibility of the homeowner to fill out the application and to get the bids for the repairs.

Scott Durbin made a motion to approve the new Blair County Code Compliance Repair Assistance Program, with an allocation of \$50,000 from the AHTF and a \$5,000 cap per project. Don Delozier seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

The Commissioners will also need to approve this program.

Open Discussion

- Scott met with some staff at the City of Altoona to discuss the County's Demolition Fund since it is not being utilized.
- Scott stated that there is some confusion as to what the official guidelines are of the demo program. It is not clear if the guidelines are defined in Act 137/Act 152 or if the AHTF created the current guidelines. Also, the cap of \$10,000 and up to 50% match per unit does not really add up when looking at past projects.

Questions that came up:

- If the cap and match could be changed?
- What is the exact definition of site control?
- Trina stated that the problem lies with privately owned property. You have to go through a codes process showing that the homeowner is non-compliant.
- Trish to look through Jim's files to see if she can locate any further details on the demo program.
- Scott would like to see if the cap and match can be changed since the cost to demolish properties have increased over the past few years.
- Commissioner Webster added that the county would be willing to work with the City of Altoona regarding properties that are on the repository.
- Trina explained how municipal liens work on properties that are privately owned.
- A suggestion was made to have the new solicitors for the county look over the demo guidelines.
- Trina stated that the definitions of blight cannot be changed.
- Prior to the next meeting, Tricia will communicate, via email, with the group about any communications regarding the demo fund.
- No motions were made regarding changes to the demolition fund. This topic will be revisited at the next meeting in August.

Next Steps:

Revisit Demolition Fund Guidelines

Reopen Sustainable Housing Program application process

Missy thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, August 14, 2024** at 8:15am in Conference Room 4B