

**Blair County Housing Trust Fund (Act 137) Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes**

Blair County Courthouse Conference Room 4B

February 12, 2020

Present: Jim Hudack, Melissa Gillin, Sergio Carmona, James Gehret, Scott Durbin, Christina Stacey, Commissioner Bruce Erb, Buddy Hann and Jennifer Kensinger

Jim Hudack welcomed everyone.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of November 13, 2019 meeting and the Agenda were emailed to the Advisory Board members prior to today's meeting.

Scott Durbin made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Jim Gehret seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Jim reported that Scott Durbin, Buddy Hann and Scott Williamson will need to be reappointed as Board Members since their term will be expiring April 30, 2020. Scott and Buddy would like to retain their appointments. Jim is to reach out to Steve Williamson to see if he would like to continue as a Board Member.

Act 137 Account Balance

- Act 137 Account current balance as of February 2020 is \$503,192.79.
- Two Expenditures:
 - \$4,957.92 (5% Annual County Fee for Administrative Expenses)
 - \$974.02 (Lead Abatement)
- \$201,500.00, in current funds, is committed to the Shelter project.

Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance

- The Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance as of February 2020 is \$84,179.92.
 - ❖ Both accounts are on MUNIS.

Program Updates

First Time Home Buyer Program

- Sergio reported that 5 people have enrolled in the program since January 1, 2020. Those people are waiting on pre-approval from a bank.
- Sergio stated that they are waiting to hear back from nineteen people, who called in last year, to see if they have been pre-approved.
- Sergio said that Blair Co. Community Action Program has been doing research into USDA Loans. These loans are available for individuals who have been denied other lending or have been approved for a predatory loan. The loans are available only for housing outside the City of Altoona. There are 502 & 504 loans. The portion of the 502 loan does have an age requirement of 62 and above. The other portion of the 502 & 504 loans does not have that age requirement, but they do have other criteria.
- To be better informed by the May 2020 AHTF meeting, Jim is sit down and discuss the USDA Loans with Sergio and his staff person, who is researching those loans. Jim is to, also, ask Trina Illig who her contact person is regarding the USDA loans.
- Jim distributed a copy of Senate Bill No. 309 for attendees to read at their leisure.

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program

- Sergio presented a furnace replacement proposal for a home located at 2312 14th Avenue, Altoona, PA. The estimated cost of the furnace replacement is \$4,999.00.
Buddy Hann made a motion to approve the request for \$4,999.00 in funds from the Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program to replace the furnace at 2312 14th Avenue, Altoona, PA. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.
- Jim addressed the issue of the \$5,000 Weatherization/Housing Rehab cap as being insufficient, as previously brought up by Sergio at the November 2019 meeting.
- Since the last meeting, Sergio researched prior weatherization/housing rehab deferrals to share with the attendees.
 - Deferrals included:
 - Water or moisture in the basement
 - Leaking roofs or roof replacements
- Discussion followed in regards to the difficulty in remedying water or moisture in the basement, as well as, the overwhelming cost that most likely would exceed the \$5,000 weatherization cap. Possible solutions like French drains and dry wells were discussed, but it was determined those ideas may not work and/or potential costs of the job could vary from \$5,000 to \$20,000.
- Since most roof replacements are exceeding the \$5,000 weatherization cap, Jim Hudack asked the Board if they would like to consider making a motion to present to the Commissioners seeking an increase of that cap. Discussion ensued in regards to seeking \$8,500 or \$10,000 for the newly proposed weatherization cap.
Scott Durbin made the motion to seek approval from the Blair County Commissioners to increase the Weatherization/Housing Rehab Cap from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Buddy Hann seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.
- Jim asked Sergio to gather the data reflecting the deferred projects that exceeded the current \$5,000 cap along with the average cost of doing the rehab.
- The second rehab project to consider is located at 206 Sickles Corner, Altoona, PA. The home is in need a roof replacement. The shingles need removed due to mold issues. A metal roof will be put on. The project exceeds the \$5,000 cap with replacement costs coming in at \$5,800.
Buddy Hann made the motion to approve the request for \$5,800.00 in funds from the Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program to replace the roof at 206 Sickles Corner, Altoona, PA. Jim Gehret seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

Homeless Shelter

- Jim Hudack reported that the Shelter project was awarded \$750,000 from the Federal Home Land Bank in December 2019.
- The project is in its final stages of design.
- A process has begun to put an application in to the New York Federal Home Loan Bank.
- Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) is supporting an application submission for tax credits in the amount of \$250,000 per year for 3 years.
- Capital Campaign is moving forward.
- Trina Illig, Grants Coordinator for Community Development, wrote a \$75,000 mini grant through PHARE that is to be used to remove the ramp inside the building and reconstruct the second floor.

Other Program Options:

Lead Abatement Program

- Christina Stacey, Community Development Specialist, gave Lead Abatement/Community Development updates.
 - New Lead Allocation is \$284,250.00.
 - No contract in hand, but contract period is March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023.
 - 19 units need to be complete. 4 units must be completed by September 2020.
 - Work is currently being done on 5 units: 2 in the City of Altoona, 2 in Williamsburg and 1 possibly in Tyrone.
 - Current Allocation for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) is \$18,013.96.
 - Recaptured Expenditures: \$10,968.52.
 - Leveraged: \$56,136.00
 - Balance: \$7,045.44
 - Lead Allocation: \$50,000
 - Expended: \$16,218.25
 - Leveraged: \$24,885.00
 - Balance: \$33,781.75
- Christina stated that additional AHTF requests may be made depending on second request of HOME funding due to increase of the City population.
- Christina reported that the Demolition Allocation for Williamsburg is \$10,000.
 - Working on Engineering Research for Proposal (RFP).
 - Anticipation of February release of Invitation for Bids (IFB).

Blight/Demolition Fund

- Jim reported the last home in the Roaring Spring project has been completed and paid for.
- Jim reported that the Williamsburg project, when completed, will have approximately \$185,000 in matching funds.
- Jim informed the attendees that there is one demolition request from the City of Altoona. The home is located at 1420 Washington Street, Altoona, PA. No dollar amount has been determined. Jim explained, normally, when there is a request from the City of Altoona, the City pays for the demolition and the AHTF pays for the hauling fee. Average cost to the hauling fee is approximately \$6,000-\$7,000.

- Jim reminded the attendees that Helen Schmitt retired as the County Administrator and has been succeeded by Nicole Hemminger, who was Helen's assistant.
- At this current time, Jim stated that the City of Altoona requests will be coming to him. He is to have a meeting in March with Rebecca Brown, Code Enforcement/City of Altoona, and Mary Johnson, CDBG Manager/City of Altoona, to discuss the 134 properties on the County Repository and how to move forward.
- Jim reported that the City of Altoona is requesting approximately \$6,000-\$7,000 from the Blight/Demolition Fund to use toward the demolition of a property located at 1420 Washington Street, Altoona, PA. Jim asked for a motion to approve that request.
- ***Scott Durbin made the motion to approve the request for an estimated dollar amount of \$6,000-\$7,000 from the Blight/Demolition Fund for use toward the demolition of a property located at 1420 Washington Street, Altoona, PA. Buddy Hann seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

Next Steps

Furnace Repair or Replacement Proposal

- Jim distributed the BCCAP Furnace Repair or Replacement Proposal that Sergio had emailed to Jim prior to the meeting.
- The proposal will be added to the May 2020 Agenda.

HOME Grant

- Jim reported that the 1st Time Home Buyers grant through HOME will not be pursued.

TEAMeffort

- Scott Durbin gave an overview of TEAMeffort.
- A handout on TEAMeffort was distributed at the November 2019 meeting.
- TEAMeffort, a mission based group, comes to Blair County for eight weeks in the summer to do basic property maintenance.
- Churches, TEAMeffort works with, identify the individuals/families in need.
- Buddy asked Scott if the group mainly does projects in the City of Altoona. Scott is to reach out to TEAMeffort to see if he can obtain some addresses of work that was completed in the past couple of years.
- Jim stated that he would have to talk to a TEAMeffort associate to discuss how they identify the people in need, as well as, projects that they do. Invoicing would also be discussed. Then he would have to discuss it with the County Solicitor.
- In addition to, Jim would also need "outcomes" showing projects completed, amount of money contributed by TEAMeffort, and amount of funds used from County contribution to do those projects. The County funds are not to be used to replace existing funds, but to add to them.
- ***Scott Durbin made a motion to recommend to the Commissioners a contribution of \$10,000 in funds to TEAMeffort to be used to buy materials to do light construction work for Blair County Individuals in need. Buddy seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***
- Jim stated that a representative from TEAMeffort will have to attend the Commissioners' meeting when the recommendation is presented.

Tabled Items Revisited: Jim asked attendees to express their opinions as to when they felt would be the best time to go to the Commissioners to ask for an increase in the fee for the recording of deeds and mortgages from \$7.50 to \$15.00. After some discussion, Jim Hudack stated that he wants to wait until the completion of the Williamsburg project to take the matter to the Commissioners. Also, Jim wants to continue to build data to support the request. Jim stated that before proceeding with the request, that he would also like to see the State report on the Affordable Housing Trust fund to see other county fees, as well as, how the fees are being used. By the May 2020 meeting, Jim will put together data and/or packet to review.

Other Discussion Topics

Point In Time (PIT) Count Update (Sergio):

- The PIT count was held January 22, 2020.
- Approximately 60 volunteers spread across 13 teams ventured out, looking for Homeless individuals in the County.
- Prior to the event, Housing & Urban Development (HUD) allowed BCCAP to canvas the area with flyers, asking individuals to self-report homelessness.
- Sergio reported that 15 total individuals were identified. Out of those 15 individuals, 7 were self-reported. Out of those 7 self-reported individuals, 3 were family members consisting of 2 adults and a toddler and the other 4 individuals were recently released prisoners. In 2019, 6 homeless individuals were identified.
- Sergio reported that there are 230 individuals in Blair County needing assistance with housing.

Rural Impact County Challenge (RICC) Learning Cohort Update

- Missy reported that Jim and Sergio attended an On-site meeting in Lake Placid in January.
- A main focus will be forensic housing/re-entry. Missy explained, often times, when incarcerated individuals are released back into the community that they do not have any housing. Palm Beach County, Florida shared their ideas with Sergio on re-entry. Union County, PA has a good program that includes a tool-kit which is also being reviewed by the Blair County team.
- On Friday, February 21, 2020, Sergio has a Re-entry meeting scheduled with Stakeholders, Adult Probation, State Parole Office, Altoona Housing Authority & Cobra Housing to develop a plan based on the collected data and information.

Jim distributed a memorandum on Senate Bill (SB) 30. Jim gave a brief overview of SB 30.

Winter Emergency Hotel Stay tabled due to lack of any data to support it.

No other future projects to address at this time.

Jim thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 13, 2020** at 8:15am at Conference Room 4B.