

**Blair County Housing Trust Fund (Act 137) Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Blair County Courthouse BlueJeans Meeting Only
November 12, 2020**

Present: Jim Hudack, Melissa Gillin, Sergio Carmona, James Gehret, Donald Delozier, Scott Durbin, Lisa Hann, Commissioner Bruce Erb, Buddy Hann, Jean Cupp and Jennifer Kensinger

Board Members Absent: Cheryl Johns

Jim Hudack announced that Missy Gillin would now be presiding over the meetings. Missy asked for roll call.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the August 12, 2020 meeting and agenda were emailed to the Advisory Board members prior to today's meeting.

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

Act 137 Account Balance

- Act 137 Account current balance stands at \$498,337.20.
 - ❖ Some of the funds are committed to the Homeless Shelter and COVID-19 Housing the Homeless

Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance

- The Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance currently stands at \$90,624.54.
 - Jean Cupp advised that approximately \$35,000 of that fund is committed to several upcoming projects.

Blair County Affordable Housing Trust Fund Allowable 10% for Administrative Costs

- Missy stated that the Allowable 10% for Administrative Costs has not been previously used, but at this time, Missy is requesting the Advisory Board to approve taking that allowable 10% for years 2019 and 2020.
- Missy stated that the allowable 10% for 2019 totals \$9,037.46 and the allowable 10% for 2020, through October 2020, totals \$7,738.61 with a grand total of \$16,776.07.
- Jim Hudack added, in detail, reasoning for asking for approval to use the allowable 10%, which is written into Act 137, to cover some of the costs incurred by Social Services to administer these programs.

Missy asked the Advisory Board to make a motion to approve using the Allowable 10% for Administrative Costs for the years 2019 and 2020.

Buddy Hann made a motion to approve using the Allowable 10% to cover administrative costs for years 2019 and 2020 in the total combined amount of \$16,776.07. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Program Updates

COVID19 Update

- Missy reported that the \$50,000 in funds used from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to “house the homeless” in hotels and motels during the outbreak of the pandemic will be refunded back into the account using CARES Act funding awarded to Blair County.
- Missy stated that Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) is continuing to house the homeless.
- Sergio Carmona, BCCAP Executive Director, added that 59 households were housed in hotels/motels using the approved funds from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. Out of those 59 households, 82 individuals were housed with 66 being adults and 16 being children. Sergio stated that BCCAP has various funds available to them to help people from becoming homeless, as well as, to put people in hotels to include Community Development Block Grant (CDBG/City), Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), Housing Assistance Program (HAP) and PA Housing Finance Agency (PFHA) CARES Act. PFHA’s application deadline was November 4, 2020. BCCAP is processing those applications. All PFHA funds must be used by November 30, 2020.

First Time Home Buyer Program

- Sergio stated that there are no updates for the First Time Home Buyer Program.

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program

- Sergio reported that he will be submitting 2 weatherization projects to Jim Hudack by the end of the week.
 - Project 1: Roof – Estimated Cost: \$8,000 range
 - Project 2: Furnace Replacement – Estimated Cost: \$6,000 range

Homeless Shelter

- Lisa Hann, Family Services Executive Director, reported that the City Council voted to award the Shelter \$542,985.00 in CDBG COVID dollars. With that number, that puts the Shelter at approximately 83% of its total project budget.
- A pre-bid conference took place about two weeks ago at the Drenning building. Contractors, who may be interested in doing the demolition, were invited in to take a look. Demolition bids were to be in by November 9, but that date was extended to November 16.
- Lisa spoke with her finance committee yesterday on moving forward on a loan, as well as, looking at the proposal in place for a construction manager.

Other Programs:

Lead Abatement Program (Trina Illig)

Missy stated that Trina Illig and Christina Stacey were unable to attend today's meeting due to being at a Lead Abatement Certification class.

Jim reported that there was only one contractor interested in becoming certified in Lead Abatement.

Blight/Demolition Fund

Missy asked the Advisory Board to make a motion to present to the Commissioners to approve an increase in the current fee for recording of deeds and mortgages from \$7.50 to \$15.00. Bruce stated that he is in favor of the increase, but he will advise when he feels the best time would be to present that resolution to the Commissioners for approval.

Buddy Hann made a motion to move forward with presenting a request to the Board of Commissioners to approve an increase the current recording of deeds and mortgages fee from \$7.50 to \$15.00. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Jim stated that since the beginning of the Demolition program, \$250,000 in projects have been submitted to the Blight/Demolition Fund. \$105,000, from the Demo fund, has been contributed to those projects. In turn, the County has been able to leverage \$142,000, in other funds, to cover those costs.

Scott Durbin addressed his concern over the high lien costs on demoed properties, which is a deterrent for developers, business owners or surrounding neighbors, who may have an interest in purchasing the property, but do not want to have to pay the high lien. Don Delozier added that, in most cases, there would also be extra engineering costs involved for a developer.

Jim answered that in regards to the church that was recently razed on 7th Avenue in Altoona that the City of Altoona would be willing to lift the lien on the property for a developer, who contacted the City with a proposal reflecting how their project would benefit the City. Also, a percentage of any money received on the sale of such properties would have to be reimbursed back to the County Blight/Demo fund.

Jim listed three properties that the Commissioners approved for demolition:

- 193 Becker Road, Tyrone (Antis Township)
 - Commissioners approved September 15, 2020
 - Blight/Demo Fund to contribute \$5,653.37
 - Antis Township to contribute \$2,422.88
- 1318 North 4th Avenue, Altoona
 - Commissioners approved September 23, 2020
 - Blight/Demo Fund to contribute \$5,000.00
 - City of Altoona to contribute \$5,000.00
- 306 Maple Avenue, Altoona
 - Commissioners approved September 23, 2020
 - Blight/Demo Fund to contribute \$5,000.00
 - City of Altoona to contribute \$5,000.00

**City of Altoona costs are estimates.

Total funds requested of the Blight/Demolition Fund is \$15,653.37.

Missy asked the Board for a motion to approve the three demolition projects.

Don Delozier made a motion to approve the three demolition projects in the total amount of \$15,653.37. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.

TEAMeffort

- Scott reported that he has been in touch with TEAMeffort members to inform them that the funding approved for the Summer of 2020 will be available in the Summer of 2021 for when TEAMeffort returns to Blair County.

Next Steps

Furnace Repair or Replacement Proposal

- Sergio reported no need for program at this time due to warmer weather pattern in the area.

Landlord/Tenant Mediation Program

- Missy reported that 7 volunteers are to begin their training today to become mediators for Blair County. Due to recent spikes in COVID-19, the entire 24 hour training event will be held virtually over 3 days. Several area Landlords are interested in participating in the program. Sergio added that BCCAP is looking for additional funding for the sustainability of the program.

Open Forum:

Scott stated that the food bank that is being constructed near BCCAP and the future Shelter site is near completion. Scott said that the food bank operators may be requesting some funding to help out with start-up expenses and utility costs within the next 30 days.

Missy thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 10, 2021** at 8:15am at Conference Room 4B. If COVID-19 restrictions are in place, the meeting may be held via Social Services' BlueJeans Account.