

**Blair County Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF/Act 137) Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
Blair County Courthouse: Conference Room 4B  
February 12, 2025**

**Present:** Commissioner Amy Webster, Tricia Johnson, Scott Durbin, Jeanne Puskar, Susan Eberhardt, Missy Gillin, Trina Illig, Donald Delozier, Wendy Melius, Lisa Hann and Gregory Werstil

**Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting were emailed to the Advisory Board members prior to today’s meeting.

*Scott Durbin made the motion to accept the minutes as presented. Susan Eberhardt 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 1/31/25	-\$20,000	\$20,000	\$49,726.20	-\$29,401.51	-\$18,000	-\$50,000	\$0	
<b>Program Available BALANCE 1/31/25</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$273.80</b>	<b>\$20,598.49</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$170,872.29</b>

**AHTF Bank Statement Balance of 1/31/2025: \$414,689.16**

**AHTF Committed Pending Payments: \$170,872.29**

**AHTF Available Non-Committed Funds: \$243,816.87**

<b>AHTF Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest)</b>	
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
August 2024	\$8,008
September 2024	\$6,994
October 2024	\$6,578
November 2024	\$7,020
December 2024	\$6,344
January 2025	\$5,967

**Demo Fund Current Account**

<b>Demolition Fund Bank Statement 1/31/25</b>	<b>\$461,920.24</b>
<b>Demolition Projects Committed Not Paid</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Demolition Program Funds Available Non-committed</b>	<b>\$461,920.24</b>
<b>Pending Board Approval</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

<b>Demolition Fund Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest)</b>	
October 2024	\$7,590
November 2024	\$8,100
December 2024	\$7,320
January 2025	\$6,885

***Blight/Demolition Fund***

- Trina reported that the City of Altoona sent in 8 (eight) demolition requests in the amount of \$40,846.50. The City is matching those funds 50/50.
- Any properties listed as county repository do not require a match in funds.
- Properties 516 N 10<sup>th</sup> St, Altoona through 1106 13<sup>th</sup> Ave, Altoona are on list, to discuss, but applications have not been received yet from the City of Altoona.
- Scott clarified that the City of Altoona properties on the demolition list that total \$48,846.50 were approved by the Board during the November 13, 2024 meeting. The other properties on the list have not, yet, been approved by the Board.
- Trina added that 2119 Mill Road, Duncansville is on the list, but not sure what will happen with it since it is privately owned.
- Don asked if the City of Altoona remits any documentation showing their actual cost (competitive bid) to demolish the property. Missy answered that the cost is attached to the official application received by the county.
- Trina stated that the eight (8) City of Altoona properties are privately owned, but private owners cannot apply for this funding, only a municipality can, so the municipality must have site control of the property, which Trina assumes the City of Altoona has, but no documentation is required of the municipality showing site control. Trina feels that documentation showing site control, competitive bids and verification that the property is

vacant should be submitted with the application, but these documents were never collected previously. Trina added that since City of Altoona is using their CDBG funds that they would have had to follow that protocol to use that money. Trina stated that documentation should be provided from the municipality showing that they went through the procurement process of site control and verifying that the property is no longer occupied.

*Scott Durbin made a motion to approve the request for \$40,846.50 from the Blight/Demolition Fund to use toward the demolition of eight (8) properties, 1519 18<sup>th</sup> Ave, 1229 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, 628 N 9<sup>th</sup> Ave, 715 N 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, 515 3<sup>rd</sup> St, 720 1<sup>st</sup> Ave, 1914 11<sup>th</sup> St and 2019 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, located in the City of Altoona. Jeanne Puskar seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried. This motion will be presented to the commissioners for their approval.*

### **2119 Mill Road, Duncansville/Demolition Match, Municipal Lien Discussion**

- Trina stated that the only other property that has an application is 2119 Mill Road, Duncansville, but it is privately owned and that it should not be demolished unless there is a municipal lien put on the property to deter the owner of the property being able to develop it once the demo is complete.
- Scott stated, during the November 2024, the Board approved waiving the municipal match, however, since it was not listed on the November 2024 agenda that approval could not move forward.
- Trina stated the guidelines need to be updated and approved to show the municipal match being waived and that a municipal lien should be attached. Commissioner Webster added that the policy and procedures, however changed, would need to be consistent.
- Commissioner Webster asked if 2119 Mill Road was an estate. Trina answered that it was not an estate. The property owners are deceased, but someone is paying the taxes.
- Greg Werstil stated this property should not even be considered to receive the demo funds, unless there is a municipal lien put on the property. He added that the municipality should be putting the lien on the property and the Board should be named an additional interest.
- Scott asked if there was any language, currently, in the Demo guidelines about municipal liens and if not, would there be a way to be flexible with the lien to negotiate with a potential buyer. Don feels that attorneys should be consulted before making changes to the guidelines. Commissioner Webster agreed that in regards to this matter an attorney should be consulted.
- Trina wants the guidelines to reflect that the Blair County Tax Claim can tap these funds to do blight removal/demolition.
- No action will be taken on 2119 Mill Road, Duncansville until site control is obtained by Allegheny Township.

*Scott Durbin made a motion to approve the request to allocate funds from the Blight/Demolition Fund, pending formal applications and confirmation of city municipal liens, to use toward the demolition of ten (10) properties, 516 N 10<sup>th</sup> St, 712 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, 1339 N 9<sup>th</sup> Ave, 2308 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave (Garage Only), 901 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, 223 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, 223 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, 1006 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and 1006 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave, located in the City of Altoona. Jeanne Puskar seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried. This motion will be presented to the commissioners for their approval.*

## County Repository Discussion

- Greg Werstil questioned the demolition and/or removal of county repository trailers that are on private property. Trina explained that right of access from the property owner would be needed to go in to remove them. Also, it would have to be determined that the correct trailer, by VIN number, would be removed. In addition to, seven of these trailers, are still occupied. To address this, a process will have to be established.
- No action was taken on the County Repository properties.

- Demo List

ADDRESS	AMOUNT REQUESTED (not to exceed \$10,000 per unit)	COST
1519 18 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	\$4,395	\$8,790
1229 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	\$3,745	\$7,490
628 N 9 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	\$4,470	\$8,940
715 N 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	\$4,370	\$8,740
515 3 <sup>rd</sup> St Altoona	\$5,000	\$10,000
720 1 <sup>st</sup> Ave Altoona	\$5,000	\$10,000
1914 11 <sup>th</sup> St Altoona	\$6,386.50	\$12,773
2019 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave Altoona	\$7,500	\$15,000
2119 Mill Rd. Duncansville	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
516 N 10 <sup>th</sup> St Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
712 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
1339 N 9 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
2308 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave Altoona <i>Garage Only</i>	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
901 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
223 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
223 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
1006 3 <sup>rd</sup> Ave Altoona	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
1104 13 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona <i>Fire damaged</i>	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
1106 13 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona <i>Fire damaged</i>	TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
806 6 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Altoona (pool deck & shed)	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
138 Lazy Hollow Rd, Allegheny Twp (trailer)	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
Short Street (shed in wooded lot) Allegheny Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
414 Yukon Drive (trailer) Allegheny Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD

1492 Reservoir Rd (trailer) Blair Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
822 Braim Lane (trailer) Frankstown Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
230 McDonald Rd (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
125 Chevrolet Dr (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
109 Fleetwood Court (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
148 Redmen Court (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
261 Tuscarora Rd (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
153 Chevrolet Dr (trailer) Freedom Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
420 Hilltop Rd (trailer) Greenfield Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
841 Scarlet Dr (trailer) Greenfield Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
119 Nora Dr (trailer) Juniata Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
116 Grove Dr (trailer) Juniata Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
611 Kenneth Rd (trailer) Logan Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
579 Sandy Run Rd (trailer) Logan Twp	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
218 N Third Alley (trailer) Martinsburg Borough	<b>County Repository</b> TBD not to exceed \$10,000	TBD
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$40,866.50</b>	

## Program Updates

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

- No update

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

- Trina reported that the County has been working with Weatherization (Center for Community Action).
- Six (6) deferrals are being worked on.
- To stay on top of this program, monthly meetings are taking place.

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

- No update

### **Other Programs:**

#### *Lead Abatement Program - Trina Illig*

- Trina reported that the Lead Hazard program is coming to an end, but units are still being worked on and there are other funding streams that can be utilized for lead abatement.

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

- This program supports referrals that do not qualify for other funding or to fill in a gap of funding when the project exceeds the maximum amount allotted through another rehabilitation program.
- Another allotment of \$50,000, from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, was requested.
- ***Jeanne Puskar made the motion to allocate \$50,000 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) to the Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Program. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

#### *Whole Home (WH) Program – Trina Illig*

- Trina has processed twenty-three (23) WH applications, so far, out of ninety (90) received.
- These American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds can be used through December 2026.
- Funds have been prioritized and used toward weatherization deferrals and code violations. Some funds have been paired with the Lead Hazard program funds.
- Not including administrative costs, over \$300,000 of the million allocated has been spent.

#### ***TEAMeffort – Scott Durbin***

- Scott reported that a new public relations (PR) person from TEAMeffort visited in Altoona in November. TEAMeffort is preparing for their return in the summer to do light construction/home repairs/lawn care in Blair County. Scott stated that this year, they are working on getting a trailer full of commercial grade equipment, either donated or loaned, to help speed up the pace of the work.
- In the past, the AHTF has allocated up to \$20,000 in funding to TEAMeffort. Another \$20,000 is being requested.

***Susan Eberhardt made a motion to recommend to the Commissioners to approve an allocation up to \$20,000 in funds to TEAMeffort, for the Summer of 2025, to be used to buy materials to do light construction work/lawn maintenance for Blair County individuals in need. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried. This motion will be presented to the commissioners for their approval.***

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

- Gregory Werstil was awarded a \$50,000 allocation from the AHTF Sustainable Housing Program to create affordable housing. However, after looking further into the project, Mr. Werstil learned that creating four (4) new affordable housing units, as proposed to and approved by the Board, was found to be too costly to proceed with that particular project. Mr. Werstil stated that since the original project was no longer an option, he pivoted away from constructing four (4) new units. Instead, Mr. Werstil converted four (4) existing units, into affordable housing. He further explained that he bought four (4), new modular units

to place on the land in Greenfield Township, but that project has been held up for a number of different reasons, but these units will be rented out as market rate value. Mr. Werstil would like reimbursed for the conversion and remodeling of the existing housing from market value to affordable housing.

- Scott asked Mr. Werstil to explain more about the units converted to affordable housing. Mr. Werstil stated that as four (4) units became available in the Greenfield Commons, he remodeled each of them, using quite a bit of funds, and converted them into affordable housing by the guidelines offered by the Sustainable Housing Program.

Scott said that the Board approved Mr. Werstil's proposal and application based on his company creating 4 **new** units. Scott stated that Mr. Werstil should not be reimbursed for a project that was not approved by the Board. He added that Mr. Werstil could reapply for funding. Mr. Werstil maintained that he did create affordable housing by remodeling 4 (four) existing units and converting them to affordable housing. He wants reimbursed for doing that project. Again, Scott stated that the Board only approved his prior application to build new affordable housing. The Board did not approve remodeling existing units and converting them to affordable housing.

Scott encouraged Mr. Werstil to apply for the funding again when the program reopens, but Mr. Werstil stated that the modular units (manufactured homes) are going to be market rate value and not affordable housing.

Mr. Werstil stated that he is not planning on applying for the funding again. He will absorb the loss and continue to allow those 4 units to be affordable housing until the occupants decide that they no longer want to stay there and then he will be able to make those units market rate value.

Missy asked for a motion to reopen the Request for Proposal process for the remaining \$100,000 in the Sustainable Housing Program. Mr. Werstil interjected that the Board should only approve \$50,000, so his options can be furthered evaluated. Scott stated that Mr. Werstil's time frame to complete his initial project expired, but he could certainly apply for the next round of funding. Missy added that the Commissioners approved the first round of awards on December 1, 2022 with a two-year deadline to complete the project.

***Scott Durbin made a motion to approve the Request for Proposal process for the Sustainable Housing program, making the remaining \$100,000.00 in funds available for two (2) different projects, with the maximum request for any project to not exceed \$50,000.00. Jeanne Puskar seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried. This motion will be presented to the commissioners for their approval.***

Mr. Werstil asked for clarification as to why his project reimbursement was getting denied. Scott answered that Mr. Werstil's application for the funding, which was approved, stated that he would create four "new" housing units. However, Mr. Werstil did not create four "**new**" affordable housing units like his proposal stated, so that is the reason why his application was being denied.

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

- Missy stated that Code Compliance funds are being blended with Trina’s funds to make the most impact.
- Missy included a list of property applications for the program so that the Board can approve the list. However, not all documents, like income verification and bids, have been submitted by the applicant, but once they are the projects can move forward.

***Jeanne Puskar made a motion to approve the following properties: 820 4<sup>th</sup> Ave; 525 6<sup>th</sup> Ave; 321 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, 1828 11<sup>th</sup> Ave, 1526 Crawford Ave; 916 N 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, 903 Lexington Ave, 1006 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, 203 E 4<sup>th</sup> Ave; 198 Sandy Run Rd; 609 5<sup>th</sup> Ave; 312 9<sup>th</sup> St; 910 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, Altoona and 615 White St., Hollidaysburg to receive up to \$5,000 per project from the AHTF to address their code violation, once all required documentation is received. Susan Eberhardt seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried. This motion will be presented to the commissioners for their approval.***

Code Violation List

ADDRESS	Code Violation	AMOUNT REQUESTED (not to exceed \$5,000 per unit)
820 4 <sup>TH</sup> Ave Altoona	Scrape Paint/Paint/Reside	\$5,000
525 6 <sup>TH</sup> Ave Altoona	Repair Front Porch Roof & Siding	\$5,000
321 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Repair Roof, down spouts	\$5,000
1828 11 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Siding repair/replacement	\$5,000
1526 Crawford Ave, Altoona	Siding repair/replacement	\$5,000
916 N 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Repair/replace siding	\$5,000
1914 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Paint/scrape exterior siding, remove litter, rubbish	\$5,000
903 Lexington Ave Altoona	Scrape paint siding, replace soffit fascia	\$5,000
1006 5 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Repair/replace siding damage, repair/replace windows & casings damaged by neighbor fire	\$5,000
203 E 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Altoona	Repair/scrape paint siding, replace soffit fascia	\$5,000
198 Sandy Run Rd Altoona	Remove garbage, cut grass weeds	\$5,000

609 5 <sup>TH</sup> Ave Altoona	Porch Repair	
312 9 <sup>th</sup> St Altoona	Remove Sewage Backage in Basement	\$5,000
910 6 <sup>TH</sup> Ave Altoona	Siding Repair/Replacement	\$5,000
615 White St Hollidaysburg	Recreational Vehicle Removal, high weeds	\$5,000

### **Board Member Reappointments**

Due to schedule conflicts, Jeanne Puskar has decided to not reapply for another term. Her term expires May 1, 2025.

James Gehret's term also expires on May 1, 2025. Due to a work conflict, Jim may no longer be able to serve.

Missy said that anyone who may be interested on serving on the Board must complete a talent bank application, which is available on the county web-site.

### ***Open Discussion***

- No further comments

### **Next Steps:**

Revisit Demolition Fund Guidelines/Demo Projects

Code Violation Approvals

Sustainable Housing applications

Board Member

Missy thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting.

### **Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, May 14, 2025** at 8:15am in Conference Room 4B