

**Blair County Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF/Act 137) Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
Blair County Courthouse: Conference Room 4B
May 10, 2023**

Present: Tricia Maceno, Commissioner Erb, Scott Durbin, Don Delozier, Jim Gehret, Susan Eberhart, Missy Gillin, Christine Zernick, Lisa Hann, Trina Illig and Jennifer Kensinger

Missy Gillin welcomed everyone. Self-Introductions were made. Susan Eberhart was welcomed as the newest board member. Susan will be replacing Buddy Hann, who resigned effective April 5, 2023.

Commissioner Erb announced that he would only be able to sit in on the meeting for twenty (20) minutes.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the February 8, 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. Don Delozier 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)	Emergency Shelter Committed Meeting 11/13/19	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	Sustainable Housing Program	TOTAL
Allocation	\$201,500	\$15,000	\$50,000	\$50,000 8/18/2022	\$3,000	\$150,000	
Paid Out as of 3/31/23	-\$201,500	\$0	-\$49,726.20	-\$41,430.55	-\$12,000	\$0	
Program Available BALANCE 3/31/23	\$0.00	\$15,000	\$273.80	\$8,569.45	\$0	\$150,000	\$173,843.25

AHTF Bank Statement Balance of 3/31/2023: \$410,814.42:

AHTF Committed Pending Payments: \$173,843.25

AHTF Available Non-Committed Funds: \$236,971.17

Moving forward, Missy will be including the chart below to reflect the AHTF Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest):

AHTF Recording Fee Deposits (excluding interest)	
November 2022	\$7,241
December 2022	\$6,890
January 2023	\$7,527
February 2023	\$4,849
March 2023	\$4,680

Program Updates

First Time Home Buyer Program

- Christine Zernick had no updates on this program.

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program

- Christine Zernick reported that Blair County Community Action Program (BCCAP) is quite busy with its weatherization program. There are 2 crews working on these projects. A third crew is being considered.
- BCCAP's Cooling program is up and running.
- Christine stated that BCCAP will continue with the Weatherization program.

Homeless Shelter

- Lisa reported, since opening, the Family Services homeless shelter has served:
 - 49 residents
 - 7 emergency overnights dropped off by the police
 - Current residents: 15 (5 men, 6 women and 4 children)
 - 4 no shows this week
 - 1 person, who had the need and followed the rules, was granted an extension beyond the 30-day stay.
- Lisa stated that about 1/3 of the residents moved out of the shelter into housing, 1/3 maxed out their stay without doing anything to improve their situation, and approximately 1/3 just left the shelter without follow-up.

Other Programs:

Lead Abatement Program (Trina Illig)

- Tricia stated that there is lots of need and that Trina is busy with the program.

Demo Fund Current Account

Demolition Fund Bank Statement 3/31/23	\$275,977.44
Demolition Projects Committed Not Paid	\$4,725.00
Demolition Program Funds Available Non-committed	\$271,252.44
Pending Board Approval	\$0.00

Blight/Demolition Fund

- Missy included a list of approved demolitions in the agenda packet.
- No new demolition requests were made.
- Trina reported that the demolition project at 424 West 1st Street, Williamsburg is now complete. Trina thanked the AHTF for allocating money toward that demolition.
- Trina consulted Nathan Karn, County Solicitor, about the definition of “site control”.
- City of Altoona properties, on the repository, are eligible for the demo funding. Municipalities, also, need to be reminded or made aware that they qualify to take advantage of the demo program.

Owner Occupied Rehab – Trina Illig

- Trina reported that she has 136 applications (32 from Logan Township) for the Owner Occupied Rehab program. 38 applications were received for the new Whole Home Program.
- Trina is sorting through the applications. Older applications will be prioritized in the process.
- At this time, Trina will not be making a request for any additional funding allocation from the AHTF.

TEAMeffort – Scott Durbin

- Scott reported that the counselors for TEAMeffort will be in town over the Memorial Day weekend to get ready for the first week of the program.
- 725-750 campers, over an 8-week period, will be in the surrounding area to do light construction/repairs/landscaping at homeowners’ residences.
- Missy asked Scott if any of the properties on the City of Altoona’s code violation list are on TEAMeffort’s list of projects. Scott answered that he did give Harry Houck the list, but the list did not specify whether the property was owned by a homeowner or a landlord.
- Contact Scott if you would like to see TEAMeffort campers working at a property.

Sustainable Housing Program – Missy Gillin

- Missy had no updates on either of the two projects that were awarded funding.
- Don Delozier reported that he had knowledge that the contractor for the Claysburg project is finding it difficult to make things happen, even with the \$50,000 allocation from the AHTF Sustainable Housing Program.

Board Members Term Renewals/Appointments – Missy Gillin

- Jim Gehret was reappointed for the period of May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2025.
- Jeanne Puskar was reappointed for the period of May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2025.
- H. Barton “Buddy” Hann resigned from the Board effective April 5, 2023.
- Susan Eberhart was appointed to fill the unexpired term of H. Barton “Buddy” Hann for the period of May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024.

Emergency Repairs – Tricia, Trina, Missy & Scott

- Tricia stated that the Emergency Repair program is on hold, for now, after discussing it with the Commissioners.
- Trina stated since this is public funding, which requires transparency, it has been suggested to pre-procure services by setting up a business agreement, renewed annually, with contractors/service suppliers, so that emergency repairs could be expedited without getting 3 bids and approval from the Commissioners.
- Tricia added that the Commissioners would be updated, monthly, on projects and expenditures.
- Missy stated that the Commissioners were, also, concerned about using emergency repairs as the program title.
- The idea is to just merge the “code violation/immediate needs” projects into Trina’s existing Owner-Occupied Rehab program.
- Scott expressed concern about combining the Owner-Occupied Rehab program with the newly proposed Emergency Repair program. He stated that the idea of the Emergency Repair program is to address code violations in the city and/or municipalities, for low income homeowners, to help stop the cycle of unpaid fines, which leads to the matter going before the Magistrate.
- Tricia stated that prior to the August meeting, she, Missy and Trina will work together to work out the details of the Emergency Repair program.
- Trina added that the Whole Home Repair program, which allows for funding for the City of Altoona, will help address some of the code violation issues.
- Scott will review the City of Altoona’s list of code violations to identify homeowners versus landlords (rental properties).

Operation Safe Space Discussion

- Christine Zernick, Executive Director of Blair County Community Action Program, was asked to speak about Operation Safe Space.
- Operation Safe Space is a new program formed by the City of Altoona and other social service agencies to identify red tagged, inhabitable properties located in the City, but in the future, the intent is to extend that to all of Blair County.

- The first property identified had no water or electricity, but had eight tenants occupying the building. After being removed from the property, the tenants were temporarily housed in hotels, but since then they have gotten permanent housing.
- To expedite this emergency process, the program solely relied on monetary donations, instead of trying to apply for grant money.
- BCCAP has received clothing, food, personal hygiene, etc. donations, but needs monetary donations, for future projects, to pay for the hotel stays and basic needs.
- Currently, another relocation project is in the works for June 2023.
- The board members discussed allocating funds from the AHTF account for Operation Safe Space to be used toward hotel stays.
- Don stated that this allocation should be separate from any other funding that BCCAP should receive for Operation Safe Space.
- Missy reminded the attendees that any AHTF Board-approved requests would still need to be presented to the Commissioners for their approval.
- Christine stated that approximately \$8,000 was used to cover the hotel fees and pet fees for the displaced tenants. The hotel stay, in some cases, was 15 days.
- ***Scott Durbin made a motion to recommend to the Commissioners to approve an allocation of \$20,000 in funds from the AHTF to Operation Safe Space. Donald Delozier seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***
- Missy will prepare a resolution to take this to the Commissioners for their approval.

Next Steps:

- Tricia, Trina and Missy will work together to determine what needs to be done to get the Emergency Repair/Code Violation program up and running.
- Scott to identify homeowners versus landlords on the City of Altoona's code violations list.

If a special/emergency meeting needs to take place before the August 9, 2023 meeting, Missy will alert everyone.

Missy Gillin thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, August 9, 2023** at 8:15am in Conference Room 4B