

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

Blair County Courthouse Conference Room 4B

August 14, 2019

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

Other Attendees: Rebecca Christ, Blair County Social Services Community Development Specialist, attended the meeting to present on the Lead Hazard Abatement Program.

Jim welcomed everyone. An updated Blair County Housing Trust Fund Advisory Board Member list was distributed to attendees.

Approval of Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes of May 15, 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. Buddy Hann seconded the motion. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Act 137 Account Balance

- Act 137 Account current balance as of August 2019 is \$466,543.16.
- On hold from Recaptured Housing Rehab is \$13,131.17.
- \$15,000 is already committed to the Lead Hazard Abatement Program.
- \$200,000 is committed to the Homeless Shelter.
- Remaining Account balance that is not committed comes to approximately \$203,000.

Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance

- The Blight/Demolition Fund Account Balance as of August 2019 is \$64,289.97.
- Three (3) demolition projects were completed with a total cost of \$27,171.18.
- As of August 2019, no other funds are committed.

Program Updates

First Time Home Buyer Program

- Jim distributed an update to the First Time Home Buyer Program.
- Due to an obstacle with the homeowner's credit score, the \$3,000 grant awarded will be applied to the house payment rather than the down payment/closing costs.
- Jim asked the Board to make a motion to approve the \$3,000 grant for the Homeowner of the property located at 2918-20 Maple Avenue.
- ***Jim Gehret made a motion to approve the \$3,000 grant awarded to the homeowner of the property located at 2918-20 Maple Avenue, Altoona, from the First Time Home Buyer Program. Buddy Hann seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

Weatherization/Housing Rehab Program

- Jim distributed updates to the Weatherization Program.
- Two (2) weatherization projects were presented to the Board that were already approved by the Blair County Commissioners to move forward on:
 - 514 Carolina Ave., Altoona, PA
 - \$2,800 requested from Weatherization Fund
 - Leveraged funds: \$5,079
 - 1911 6th Ave., Altoona, PA
 - \$5,000 requested from Weatherization Fund
 - Utility Company paying \$1,200
 - Leveraged funds: \$12,200.44
 - ❖ Total amount requested from Weatherization Fund: \$7,800
 - ❖ Total Leveraged Funds: \$17,279.44
- Sergio expressed difficulty finding contractors to do these types of *small* construction jobs.
- Jim Hudack requested the Board make a motion to accept the two (2) weatherization projects named above.
- ***Buddy Hann made a motion to accept the two (2) weatherization projects. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***

Homeless Shelter

- Jim Hudack reported that Family Services did acquire the building in late July 2019.
- Overall Shelter cost will be \$2.8 million.
- Funds committed to the Shelter total a little over a 1 million.
- A Federal Home Loan Bank application was just submitted for \$750,000.
- Another \$100,000 donation through tax credits may be received.
- Additional funds may be received through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
- Capital Campaign efforts will intensify.
- Possibility for opportunities through DCED.

Other Program Options:

Lead Abatement Program

- Jim introduced Rebecca Christ, Community Development Specialist, to the Board. Rebecca will be focusing on the Lead Abatement and Housing Rehabilitation Programs.
- Rebecca reported that \$85,000 is allocated for the Lead Abatement Program which is enough to do 5 units.
- 7 applicants have applied for the program. 3 projects are underway and 4 applicants are awaiting inspections.
- Rebecca reported that they submitted an application for a \$382,000 grant through the Department of Health which includes a Healthy Homes Fund in the amount of \$67,000 to be used toward 29 additional hazards within the home.
- Also a Home Grant Application in the amount of \$285,000 has been submitted.

- Over a 3 year period, 30 units will be rehabilitated in the Lead Abatement Program.
- If additional grant monies are obtained, the next step is to get the word out through various media outlets.
- Home inspectors and contractors (trained in lead disciplines) are needed. Scott Durbin to put the word out on that.

Blight/Demolition Fund

- Jim distributed a copy of the County of Blair Demolition Fund Application submitted by Roaring Spring Borough.
- Jim informed meeting attendees that Roaring Spring Borough acquired 2 (two) additional residential properties located at 219 and 227 Main Street. The borough has submitted another application to the Blight/Demolition Fund for the demolition of those 2 (two) homes in the total requested amount of \$13,472.00 from the Demolition Fund. The Roaring Spring Borough will contribute \$6,000.00 in their funds toward the demolitions.
- ***Scott Durbin made a motion to approve the Roaring Spring Borough's request for \$13,472.00 from the Demolition Fund to demolish two homes. Jim Gehret seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***
- Helen Schmitt, County Administrator, joined the meeting and informed the attendees of the estimated costs of the demolition of a property located at 1420 Washington Avenue, Altoona. A cost sheet was distributed. Helen explained that the County is responsible for the cost of the Excavator Transport fee and the Hauling Waste fee. Those fees total \$6,950.00. The City of Altoona fees would total \$6,751.00.
- ***Buddy Hann made the motion to approve the request for \$6,950.00 from the Blight/Demolition Fund to cover Blair County's portion of the demolition of the property located at 1420 Washington Ave., Altoona, PA. Scott Durbin seconded the motion. All present were in favor. Motion carried.***
- Jim informed the attendees of 2 (two) future projects that may be presented to the Board. Jim gave details on a property located in Williamsburg and Commissioner Erb presented details on a property located in Tyrone.
- Jim reported that an annual report was submitted to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) to reflect any funds collected and/or allocated over the past year. Funds were allocated to three (3) projects.

Next Steps

Furnace Repair or Replacement Proposal

- Sergio Carmano, BCCAP, reported that DCED and the utilities companies would allow for funds to be mixed with Blair County funds for the repair or replacement of furnaces.
- Sergio listed the criteria for the contractors.
- Jim asked to meet with Sergio before November's next meeting to go over a program description.

Home Grant

- Jim reported that Social Services is still looking at doing the Home Grant.
- Melissa Gillin and Trina Illig are going to work together to decide if they want to add a component to the Home Grant.

Other Discussion Topics

Jim distributed a hand-out on TEAMEffort Youth Mission Camp. Scott Durbin presented details about TEAMEffort. TEAMEffort comes to Blair County for eight weeks in the summer to do basic property maintenance. A meeting was held with some members of TEAMEffort, Jim Hudack and Scott Durbin to discuss contributing money to the mission camp since the group is already investing money within Blair County to do this light construction work. Jim stated that the group is to come up with a program description to be reviewed. Follow-ups and discussion will continue at November meeting.

Tabled Items: Asking Board of Commissioners for an increase in the recording of deeds from \$7.50 to \$15.00.

Jim closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 13, 2019** at 8:15am at Conference Room 4B.