



**Kalamazoo County
Public Housing Commission**

**Business Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 7, 2021**

Commission Members Present: David Anderson, David Artley, LaToya Haywood, and Evelyn Lewis, Monteze Morales

Commission Members Absent: None

Kalamazoo County Commissioners Present: Zachary Bauer and Tracy Hall

LHAF Millage Monitor and Recording Secretary Present: Melanie Gildea and Lisa Willcutt

Call to Order and Approval of Meeting Agenda

The meeting was called to order on Zoom

(<https://zoom.us/j/93629567409?pwd=Y051MnRpeIlYOGIwSjlqeFpEdlg0Zz09>) by Artley at 4:33 pm.

Motion to approve agenda by Anderson

Support by Lewis

Motion Approved

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 2020 meeting were approved as submitted.

Motion by Lewis

Support by Haywood

Motion approved

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None

Old Business

Year 4 Millage Evaluation Report

Kalamazoo County Commissioner Zach Bauer is serving on the Evaluation sub-committee with PHC Board members Lewis and Haywood. Upon review of the most recent iEval evaluation, the Commission formed the sub-committee to review the previous 4 years of iEval reports. The Commission feels that while HRI appropriately administers parts of the voucher program, there are essential functions where HRI's attention could be significantly improved. Additionally, HRI's response to iEval's most recent evaluation failed to provide actionable steps it could take to improve its management of the program. The Commission values HRI's work and the organization's commitment to Kalamazoo. The sub-committee provided recommendations to improve the partnership between the Commission and HRI. The Commission has requested HRI provide a 90-day plan to improve access to safe and affordable housing, cultural competence, and improved durability of the program. The Commission would like HRI to refocus their attention to improving its administration of the County program. Anderson thanked Bauer, Lewis, and Haywood for their work on this. He made a motion to accept the draft copy as presented and send to HRI for feedback.

Motion by Anderson

Support by Morales



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Further discussion took place in regard to the motion.

Bauer suggested adding exact dates by which HRI is to respond. Morales suggested sending the draft to HRI requesting feedback from them by February 1, 2021. Discussion regarding following took place as well. The Commission desires HRI's attention to improve its administration of the County program by the close of business on February 1, 2021. The Commission will conduct a 90-day evaluation of HRI's progress on June 1, 2021.

Motion to amend the original motion to include the dates by Anderson

Support by Morales

Motion Approved

Reports

Financial Reports

Willcutt reported that County funds were received in January as reimbursement for costs expended. Millage funds and interest have also been received. Willcutt added that Keystone house rents continue to come in as well. The KCF endowment funds were reimbursement funds for the work that was done for lead abatement at Bethany House.

Typical expenses year-to-date include staffing for Keystone House and FUSE and budgeted expenses. Lockhart is closing out the year and preparing for the audit. Other than those items, there was nothing extraordinary to report.

Motion to accept the financial reports by Lewis

Support by Haywood

Motion Approved

LHAF Millage Progress Report

Willcutt shared the breakdown of the millage billing between direct client assistance and staffing and administration. The Board had inquired about whether the direct client assistance in year-4 would be sufficient. Jacob Beach, program director at HRI says the funds will be sufficient but in year-5 HRI hopes to house over 100 families to make up for the shortage in year-4. This could cause a need for additional funds. Willcutt added that they may have to borrow from the funds designated as COVID-19 funds (which can be reclassified for another use) or the funds received from the reconciliation of property taxes for 2019 that have not been designated for other than general Millage use.

Willcutt addressed Haywood's inquiry from the previous month's meeting about Millage participants' income vs. rent paid. One example was a family that has an income of \$716 but their rent is \$860. Willcutt provided feedback to the committee that worked on the HRI year-4 feedback report. Willcutt also audited five of these families during the December HRI meeting. She added that the case management notes were not updated for several clients in HRI's system. There were other clients for which the notes were very thorough. Willcutt shared an example on one family whose income decreased. This household entered program with \$1,450 of income that increased to \$2,008; however, a year later their income went down to \$640, and their rent was \$650. This is a drastic increase that was caused by a maternity leave, so that is why the



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income decreased. The head of household went back to work and now income is now restored. There are some instances where the income does not rise to the level of rent so that family will not be able to remain in their home at the end of the program. Artley asked if Jacob Beach, who was on the Zoom call, wanted to add anything to the report but he said he was there to listen.

Bethany House

Willcutt shared that wall and ceiling repairs are in progress. There was a withdrawal from the KCF endowment which was reported on the financial report used to pay for the lead abatement work.

Old Business

LGBTQ+ Initiative/116 Fellows

Artley shared the construction update at 116 Fellows. The upper roof, kitchen roof, and the front porch are redone. The new furnace and water heater have been installed. These are the items that are eligible for rebate from Consumers. He said that if rebates come through, there may be \$20,000-\$25,000 to put in the operational reserve funds.

Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services (KNHS) is making progress on the house being built near the westside of 116 Fellows. In order to save money, there will be a shared driveway between the houses. This will take place in the spring.

Artley has had conversation with CARES as they prepare a program budget.

Morales asked about the capacity of tenants in regard to COVID-19 guidelines. Artley said based on his recent conversation with CARES, there will be two clients in each bedroom. He is communicating with CARES on capacity and establishing safe distances. Artley and CARES will mutually establish a move-in date once the lease is signed. Artley asked if one of the board members would volunteer to attend the next meeting with him. He will send an email with the date. Lewis volunteered to attend the next meeting on February 19, 2021.

New Business

Veteran Homelessness Initiative

The Community Advisory Board has been meeting regularly. There are currently 11 veterans living at the house at Keystone. He said the program participants are looking to do some construction on the garage areas. Artley said there have been some graduates as well as some veterans that have been asked to leave. Artley said he hoped that there was an intern who was going to help Tyrone; however, that has not been the case. Juan Gonzalez, who is the veteran navigator for Integrated Services of Kalamazoo, has been able to help out at Keystone when Tyrone has not been able to be there.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Michelle Davis from HRI thanked the Board for the response and the work on the last millage evaluation report. She asked the Board to consider putting some information on how progress will be measured in the document that they will be sending to HRI. Davis said that the approved



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motion requires HRI to be reevaluated in 90 days. She would like the Board to consider clarifying what defines improvement.

Artley said that Davis made a good point. He said a lot would depend on what HRI provides as to what they will be working on. He said that working together to come up with mutually agreeable measurements is his recommendation.

Willcutt reminded the Commission that the survey designed for millage participants is supposed to go out in February. She wondered if this is still desired. Artley said that this information from participants will give the Board some feedback on how things are going and working. Willcutt said that self-addressed return envelopes and a \$10 gift card to Walmart will be included with the surveys.

Commissioner Member Comments

Anderson wants to recognize the disturbing times and how we all have to witness these unprecedented times. He said these times are more disturbing for people of color as this is where more animosity has been directed, and some are more affected than others. He wants us to be conscious of these things and not to contribute to this in any way. Anderson said he focuses on good work and community building in these difficult times. He said he is grateful for work by the Commission. With work by the Commission, families and individuals have been housed, Bethany recovery center provides shelter, veterans have a shelter, FUSE partner projects are helping people, a successful millage has passed and soon there will be a LGBTQ+ shelter.

Morales thanked Mayor Anderson for sharing his thoughts. She says everything starts local, so her focus is on Kalamazoo and how the millage can help the community. She hopes we continue to work with community leaders to do what is important. She looks forward to work that the Commission is doing and rebuilding Kalamazoo.

Lewis said she feels like a gray cloud has been hovering over us but hearing Anderson's positive comments is helpful.

Haywood said 2020 has been a tough year. She said she is thankful for the extra time with her kids. Times have been uncomfortable, but we need to stay focused and push forward.

Artley thanks Anderson and he sees change coming and is thankful for the growth of the Board. He is excited to have Mary Balkema in the housing circle as she is the new housing director for Kalamazoo County.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Submitted by: Melanie Gildea