



**Business Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
February 10, 2022**

**Commission Members Present:** David Anderson, Patrese Griffin, Gwendolyn Hooker, and Evelyn Thompson

**Commission Members Absent:** None

**Kalamazoo County Commissioners Present:** Tami Rey

**Kalamazoo County Housing Director Present:** Mary Balkema

**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 at the Kalamazoo County Building, second floor Board Chambers, 201 West Kalamazoo Avenue, by President Thompson at 4:36 pm. Willcutt called the roll. All members were present.

The agenda was approved as submitted.

*Motion by Anderson*

*Support by Griffin*

*Motion Approved*

**Approve Minutes of the January 13, 2022 meeting**

Hooker made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 13, 2022, meeting.

*Motion by Hooker*

*Support by Anderson*

*Motion Approved*

**Approve Minutes of the January 24, 2022 Special Meeting**

Hooker made a motion to approve the minutes from the special meeting.

*Motion by Hooker*

*Support by Griffin*

*Motion Approved*

**Public Comment on Agenda Items and Non-Agenda Items:** None

**Treasurer Position**

Willcutt reported that the by-laws will need to be changed if the board wants to have a treasurer position. She also indicated that since the position of vice president is a requirement and Haywood resigned, the board will need to elect someone to hold that position. Anderson made a motion to appoint Griffin as the vice president. There was support by Thompson. All members were in favor. Griffin accepted the position as vice president.



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*Motion by Anderson  
Support by Thompson  
Motion Approved*

**Reports**

Financial Reports

Willcutt reported that generally everything is on target. Bethany House expenses are high for the month, which is due to payment of the annual property insurance premium. This is a budgeted expense. The millage housing supports are far under budget, and the excess funds will be part of the fund balance discussion later in the meeting.

The costs for support services for the Veterans Homeless Initiative for the last quarter of 2021 are reflected on the reports provided by Willcutt. Willcutt pointed out the bank reconciliation and activity throughout the month. She added that the line items were similar to last month.

Balkema inquired about the Fellows funds. The board will have to determine what to do with the remaining funds. Balkema added that the funds can be put in the fund balance as well. There will need to be a motion to decide what to do with the funds. The majority of the remaining funds are from the sale of the property to OutFront Kalamazoo. Hooker suggested leaving a certain amount in reserves and putting the rest in the general funds since it was earmarked for the LGBTQ+ program initially. The board decided to table the conversation until the March meeting.

There was a motion to accept the financial reports as submitted.

*Motion by Griffin  
Support by Anderson  
Motion Approved*

January Housing Resources, Inc. Millage Reports

There is not much to review since things are winding down with the program. There was a quarterly report that summarized the activity over the fourth quarter of 2021 included in the reports as well.

Bethany House

Willcutt did not have anything to report on Bethany House.

**Old Business**

Millage Work Plan and Budget (2015 Millage)

The Work Plan for the Millage program expired at the end of 2021. Willcutt included a past Work Plan and Budget as a template to use for creating a 2022 Millage Work Plan and Budget. Hooker asked why they are begin presented with the Work Plan and Budget again as she thought that it was completed. Willcutt explained that that the Work Plan and Budget that was submitted to the county covered operating expenses, now a similar document is needed for the Millage program. She explained that she cannot write the Millage Work Plan and Budget until she knows how funds will be expended. The Work Plan and Budget does not have to be written in exact detail but should include general allocations.



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In the meeting packet, Willcutt provided the board with the ideas that were generated at the special meeting regarding use of the remaining millage funds. Anderson summarized the ideas and shared with the group. One of the ideas is to create permanent housing with the possibility of leveraging investment with another project. Another idea is to buy an existing property that is family friendly and could include some Section 8 housing. One of the other ideas is to build something new which could focus on multi-family rentals. Anderson has recently heard that the Section 8 housing voucher waiting list may be opened as it has not been open for many years. He went on to say that there may be a new model for getting on the Section 8 voucher waiting list if it is reopened. The approach may include a capped number of applications that are selected through a lottery being added to the wait list. With that being said, Anderson thinks having a resource to help people move into housing when they may have barriers by helping with the security deposit or first month's rent may be another way to utilize funds from the Millage. Anderson suggested a smaller investment for this work and a larger investment to help with permanent supportive housing.

Griffin apologized for not getting any of her ideas to the board since the special meeting. She agrees with creating permanent housing. Griffin explained that RentAble is program that helps with security deposits. She thinks that this program could be a way to get funds to those in need since they have the infrastructure to do so in place already.

Balkema stated that Kalamazoo County Land Bank is the largest owner of vacant properties, which are mostly located in Kalamazoo's northside. She said she could take a look at the inventory of foreclosed properties or otherwise vacant properties if that is the route the KCPHC would like to go for suitable land.

For the purpose of presenting to the County Board of Commissioners, Griffin asked how specific the Work Plan needed to be. County Commissioner Rey said that just a general plan about how to serve families with school age children would be sufficient.

If someone is applying for public or subsidized housing, housing authorities and subsidized landlords are required to tell you what preferences are available so that you have an opportunity to show them whether you qualify. Willcutt inquired whether public housing commissions can make a preference for people with vouchers as their source of income. Griffin said so many people fall outside of housing assistance, and there's so much more to it than housing assistance and vouchers. Griffin added that if the KCPHC were to own more of a residential type of housing property, then this would give the commission the opportunity to be more creative with the process of preferences for housing assistance following the state and local guidelines.

Anderson suggests setting some money aside to assist families who have school aged children with move-in costs. This could be flexible spending for move-in costs to help families with security deposits, first month's rent, utility costs and other barriers to housing. Doing so would provide a flexibility that is not currently available. The rest of the money could be designated for permanent housing for families with school aged children. Anderson suggested setting \$200,000 aside to assist people with housing in a flexible manner and address barriers in obtaining



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housing. Hooker added that she thinks this gives the commission the ability to be transformative and impactful. She agrees with setting aside the other portion of the \$1.2 million to build affordable housing for families in order to move forward with the Work Plan. Anderson made the motion to use \$200,000 for flexible spending to address barriers in obtaining rental housing for families with school aged children and the remaining \$1 million for the creation of permanent housing for families with school aged children.

*Motion by Anderson*

*Support by Hooker*

*Motion Approved*

**New Business**

Congressman Fred Upton was in Kalamazoo and visited the Veteran's Homeless shelter. This resulted from Upton meeting with Integrated Services of Kalamazoo. Anderson shared with Upton and members that attended the event that the shelter is a combination project which is largely funded by the KCPHC. County money is allocated to this project, and Anderson thinks it is important to help remind the county commission of the work that is going on in the community.

Anderson's term on the KCPHC will end in March. He is open to reapplying. He explained that if the members of the commission feel it is of value to have him on the board, then he would be happy to reapply. He added that if it is time for a change, he is good with that. He would like some feedback from the board.

Since Haywood officially resigned from the KCPHC, it is important that the county board know that there is a vacant position. Willcutt advised that she let the county know when the resignation was received.

**Public Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items:**

Regarding the open position on the KCPHC, Balkema inquired whether the board would like to be intentional about it, and recruit for the opening. She also asked about the requirement to have a board member that receives housing assistance on the board.

Hooker commented that she was under the impression that previous candidates were going to be considered.

Anderson clarified that the state statute says that one person of the commission must live in public housing. Since there is no public housing in Kalamazoo County, the KCPHC modified that requirement to count a member receiving Section 8 or some other sort of housing assistance. Anderson said this is how the board has interpreted it over the years.

**Commissioner Member Comments**

Thompson shared that she is having major surgery and will need to step down as president. Balkema noted that she expects the Open Meetings Act to allow for virtual meeting access when a health condition prevents a board member from participating in a meeting.



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Griffin congratulated Commissioner Hooker on her Tiny Houses project. She also thinks the board needs to find a replacement for Haywood's position that does meet the requirements that Anderson explained in his comments.

Meeting Adjourned: 5:42 pm

Submitted by: Melanie Gildea