



**Business Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 5, 2023**

Commission Members Present: David Anderson (arrived at 5:15p), Kizzy Bradford, Gwendolyn Hooker, and Patrese Griffin

Commission Members Absent: Coty Dunten

Kalamazoo County Commissioner Present: Tami Rey

Kalamazoo County Housing Director Present: None

Administrative Service Provider and Recording Secretary Present: Lisa Willcutt

Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at the Kalamazoo County Building, Board Chambers, 201 West Kalamazoo Avenue by President Griffin at 5:10pm. Willcutt conducted the roll call. A motion was made to excuse Anderson and Dunton's absences.

Motion by Hooker

Support by Bradford

Motion approved

Approve Meeting Agenda

The meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

Motion by Hooker

Support by Bradford

Motion approved

Approve Minutes of the September 7, 2023 Meeting

Griffin asked for approval of the meeting minutes from September 7, 2023. The minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion by Bradford

Support by Hooker

Motion approved

Public Comment on Agenda Items and Non-Agenda Items

A public comment was made by Joanna stating that Mayor Anderson does not do anything about the conditions in which residents live. The biggest problem is landlords and their connections to one another. There is blacklisting that goes on among landlords with residents who speak up. She went on to say that at least 2,000 homes are needed because there are 2,000 homeless, yet the City of Kalamazoo is interested in the bare minimum for Black and Brown people. Fifty-six percent of Black and Brown people live below the ALICE threshold; White people do not live like Black and Brown people. Thirty percent of White people live below the ALICE threshold. She moved here from elsewhere because Kalamazoo seemed to be more progressive, but it is not.



**Kalamazoo County
Public Housing Commission**

A comment was made by Meg Bauer of Legal Aide who wanted to let the comments made by the previous person sit as they were very good; accountability is really important. She went on to say that if you know someone who is experiencing an injustice, refer them to her office. She also wanted to personally invite the elected ad those present to an open out at Legal Aide to celebrate their recent move to 141 E. Michigan Avenue on October 18, 2023 from 3p-6p. Light refreshments will be served.

Shonna Espinoza stated that housing is ridiculous in Kalamazoo. You have a mayor who sits on a lot of boards, including Interfaith Homes of Kalamazoo. When she moved into her current home things were not clean and she had to clean the unit. She called the City. The basement was supposed to be cleaned in February but has not been. The shower upstairs in her unit still doesn't work. She emailed Anderson personally and never got a response. When is Anderson going to do his job? She will not vote for anyone besides Anderson. She wants to know when Anderson will help residents of Kalamazoo.

Tristen Just is part of a group called We The People Action Fund that is working to overturn a state law that prevents rent control and rent stabilization. Various municipalities have passed resolution to end this law, which would allow local municipalities to provide oversight. He handed out flyers about this group.

Alexander Yaw stated that he does not live in the City of Kalamazoo. He said that it seems that there is a thin veneer of progressivism. His apartment complex is down to one maintenance person and has had a lot of property manager turnover, but his complex is better than most and the rent is ridiculous. He is asking that the KCPHC does their job.

Mary Crosby is grateful to be able to express herself. She came from Chicago and is in awe of the problem here. She said that the Institute for Public Scholarship is trying to build tiny houses on Hotop using geothermal. She does canvassing and engagement and they talk about different ways to come together and solve the problem with an advisory team. They had a woman and her kids who spent 9 months finding housing and what they found smells like urine and has roaches. Her group is looking to come together through mixers and other events.

Alexander Long is not from Kalamazoo, he is originally from Detroit, MI. He came here for college and there was a lot that attracted him to stay in Kalamazoo. Looking at the reality, it is disappointing. There are things that we could do better in Kalamazoo. The missing amount of people on this board is a problem, even coming in late is better than nothing. There are people that are scraping tooth and nail and sleeping on the concrete. He just wants to bring attention to that and that there is more to be done.

Commissioners Griffin, Hooker and Bradford thanked those in attendance for speaking out.



**Kalamazoo County
Public Housing Commission**

Reports

Financial Reports

Willcutt summarized the September 2023 Financial Reports that were distributed prior to the meeting noting that there was a donation to Keystone House from an American Legion Post. She also stated that costs for FUSE resulted from the correction of a water leak and resulting installation of a sump pump. Keystone House expenses resulted from purchase of an additional table for the dining area and a bed bug treatment. A motion was made to accept the September 2023 financial report.

Motion by Anderson

Support by Bradford

Motion approved

Bethany House – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting with action requested to approve a bid from ProTech Environmental to remove a cracked plaster ceiling with lead based paint.

Motion by Anderson

Support by Bradford

After discussion, Anderson withdrew the motion.

A motion was made to move ahead with all due speed while seeking another competitive proposal and if the ProTech Environmental bid is the lowest proposal then move ahead with this in addition to doing lead clearance testing.

Motion by Anderson

Support by Hooker

Motion approved

Veterans Initiative – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting and included updated costs for improvements that have been completed to date along with a bid for interior repainting.

FUSE – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting.

Portage Condominium – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting along with an updated spreadsheet with costs incurred to prepare the condominium for sale. Willcutt noted that a new range hood would be purchased in black to match the range at a cost of not more than \$181.77.

Old Business

2015 Millage



**Kalamazoo County
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Creating Transitional Housing – Commissioners Anderson and Hooker did not have an opportunity to meet during the past month but will do so prior to the November meeting and will bring recommendations.

Removing Barriers to Housing (\$200,000) – Willcutt stated that Kalamazoo County’s legal counsel approved the Grant Agreement between the KCPHC and ISK. Due to the length of time that had passed from the original start date of the Agreement it was requested that the dates of the Agreement be changed from 9/1/23-8/31/24 to 10/15/23-10/14/24.

*Motion by Hooker
Support by Bradford*

*Roll Call Vote:
Anderson - abstain
Bradford - yes
Griffin - yes
Hooker – yes
Motion approved*

New Business

2015 Millage – Determine Criteria to be included in the Work Plan and Budget for 2024 – A draft Millage Work Plan and Budget was distributed prior to the meeting and discussed during the meeting. A new Plan is due by November 15, 2023 to the county, although Rey stated that submitting it prior to the 15th of November was requested by the county. Anderson and Hooker will discuss any changes that need to be made when they meet to determine how to proceed with creating transitional housing as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Approve Revision of Bylaws to effect Address Correction – A draft of the recommended bylaw revision was distributed prior to the meeting and included changing the address under *Section 2 – Office of Commission*. Willcutt also noted that *Section 6 – Order of Business* did not reflect the current meeting agenda used by the Commission. A motion was made to change the address under Section 2 to 2725 Airview Blvd., Suite 202, Kalamazoo, MI 49002 and to change the order of business under Section 6 to reflect the order of business that is currently used for KCPHC meeting agenda.

*Motion by Bradford
Support by Hooker
Motion approved*

Public Comment on Agenda and Non-Agenda Items

Meg Bauer asked about the last order of business and whether a public comment period was eliminated. President Griffin explained that the public comment periods were retained as they are currently.



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Leslie Palmer lives in the Edison Neighborhood on Lay Blvd. The basement flooded with feces and there was nothing done by the management for one week. The toilet also flooded the unit. The unit has now been sold. She is keeping her rent in escrow as she awaits her court date.

Joan Espinoza asked why Integrated Services of Kalamazoo is being used. This should be a conflict of interest because of Anderson. Who is responsible for allocating the housing agreement?

Quincy Ellis stated he was born in Kalamazoo. It is clear to him that money is going to educational purposes. WMU spent \$2 million on a new student center. How do you get an education when they don't know how to spend their money and how to maintain land and buy a house and what certifications are required to buy a house. There are certifications needed to buy a car. Why are we having festivals?

Commissioner Member Comments

Vice President Hooker is glad everyone is here and encouraged people to keep coming back. The next meeting is November 2, 2023 at 5:00p.m. Tomorrow is the first Friday of the month so there is a lot going on. Send any questions you have and someone will respond. There is a retreat for resilient justice from October 13th through 15th with free transportation. See the Justice Against Bullying Facebook page to find out more.

President Griffin encouraged those present not to stop speaking out. When she had her housing crises she was coming to meetings like this and she was homeless. She explained that her daughter started high school while their family was living in a hotel room and that is what she spoke of at her high school graduation. There are many people doing the work.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:35 pm

Submitted by: Lisa Willcutt