



**Kalamazoo County  
Public Housing Commission**

**Business Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
May 2, 2024**

**Commission Members Present:** David Anderson, Coty Duntun, Patrese Griffin, and Gwendolyn Hooker

**Commission Members Absent:** Kizzy Bradford

**Kalamazoo County Commissioner Present:** None

**Kalamazoo County Staff 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 5:00 pm. Willcutt conducted the roll call.

**Approve Meeting Agenda**

The meeting agenda was approved as submitted.

*Motion by Duntun*

*Support by Anderson*

*Motion approved*

**Approve Minutes of the April 4, 2024 Meeting**

Griffin asked for approval of the meeting minutes from April 4, 2024. The minutes were approved as submitted.

*Motion by Duntun*

*Support by Anderson*

*Motion approved*

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

Shonna Espinoza said that her landlord increased her rent by \$390 with a security deposit of \$750. She asked for help and there were two organizations that offered to help, but communication was not good. She resigned her lease and now has \$1,354 per month for rent which is 90% of her income. This will be the third time she will have to move since February. Rent went from \$910 to \$1,354 and she brings home approximately \$1,400. Agencies don't understand the urgencies. Now she has resigned the lease and she cannot get any help. What are we supposed to do to help with these needs? She paid \$2,100 to move in and everything is not upgraded or fixed.

**Reports**

Integrated Services of Kalamazoo – Update on Millage Rapid Rehousing

Brandon Mion provided an update on the School Based PHC Subsidy program along with data on the program in the form of a handout. The program has expended \$103,650 to date. Mion's



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concern is with the community because the HARA is out of rapid rehousing funding right now and there are a lot of families that need help. Mion currently has 61 families he is working with and 18 referrals on his desk but is almost out of funding. There have been 47 families housed and he has 6 more ready to move in. Those 6 families will use up the rest of the funding. Mion stated that this is tough for him because he has been working with the families and it seems like an empty promise because the program will be out of funding soon. Mion wants the help of the KCPHC.

Robin Greymountain stated that she wants to support Mion. She stated that Mion does more than what the job is. She is scared for the community, especially if the same thing happens in Kalamazoo that happened in Battle Creek when the shelter closed this week.

Griffin noted that ISK is not required to give monthly update, rather, quarterly updates are required by the contract.

Anderson asked what amount of Direct Client Assistance would be needed through the end of September. Mion stated he was unsure, but he thought around \$50,000.

Mion stated that ISK has hired another person to help with this work and that they will begin on May 6, 2024.

Griffin asked if ISK had sought funds through any other source for this program. Mion stated that other than seeking assistance from the HARA, funding has not been sought from any other organizations. Griffin stated that HRI (the HARA) would not receive additional MSHDA funding until October 2024. She suggested that a Continuum of Care (CoC) mini grant could be awarded up to \$15,000.

#### Financial Reports

The April 2024 financial reports were distributed prior to the meeting and were reviewed by Willcutt. A motion was made to accept the April 2024 financial reports as submitted.

*Motion by Anderson*

*Support by Hooker*

*Motion approved*

Bethany House – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting. Willcutt distributed a draft roof replacement request for proposal (RFP) that was based on a bid from a contractor. She asked the commissioners for recommendations on someone that could evaluate the RFP. Willcutt stated that she could also ask an architect. Dunten stated that she had a contractor that she would ask to review it.

Veterans Initiative – A written report of activity was distributed prior to the meeting. No additional action was taken.



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FUSE – A written report of activity and a proposal for a roof repair was distributed prior to the meeting. During the meeting Willcutt distributed a second roof repair proposal. A motion was made to accept the Premiere proposal at a cost of \$1,250.

*Motion by Hooker*

*Support by Anderson*

*Motion approved*

**Old Business**

2015 Millage – Creating Permanent Housing – Sugarloaf

*Bill of sale for purchase of Schoolcraft Modulars*

Hooker informed the group that they were ready to proceed with the Bill of Sale. The master lease template was received today. Hooker will send the template to Willcutt for distribution. Anderson asked about the exterior upgrade package and it was confirmed in the attachment to the Bill of Sale that was distributed prior to the meeting that various upgrades were included. A motion was made to approve the Bill of Sale.

*Motion by Dunten*

*Support by Hooker*

Anderson and Griffin made comments.

*Motion approved*

Process for funding opportunities

Discussion and clarification of what portion of the previous proposed document was moved to the Acquisition and Disposition of Properties policy. Both the original “Equitable process for applying for funding from public housing commission,” “Process for evaluating properties,” and “Acquisition and Disposition of Properties” documents were distributed prior to the meeting. Anderson moved that the KCPHC adopt the equitable process section in the black print.

*Motion by Anderson*

*Support by Dunten*

Discussion occurred among the commissioners.

*Motion approved*

**New Business**

None.

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

Shonna Espinoza said that there are a lot of people asking for help. When we don’t hear back from assistance organizations, then we panic. This is real and is affecting her. Housing is a big issue for Kalamazoo. She doesn’t want to be out on the street. She is here to be a voice for others in the community. She asked why we all aren’t working together. Can we all sit down and have a conversation and fix this problem?



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Joana M. Babcock stated that 62% of people are cost overburdened in Kalamazoo according to the Kalamazoo County housing report. She is part of a group called We the People. Homeless people are working people. If people have issues it is because they are homeless. We need to do something groundbreaking. It is time to challenge the system.

Juanita Ford stated that she is an ISK Housing Navigator and is speaking in support of the team. She went on to say that it is time to give a solution to help those that are right in front of us. Youths cannot go to school after being up all night in a shelter or in a car. Can we do something to help those children find housing?

### **Commissioner Member Comments**

Hooker stated that she really appreciates people being in the gallery to hear from actual people having actual housing problems. She went on to say that the KCPHC is not able to assist everyone. She encourages people to work with those in the schools and that maybe We the People should convene folks to work together. We don't need another family living in an untenable situation. Housing is a human, basic need and a lot of bad things can happen when you don't have it, especially to children. Hooker said she is glad that the KCPHC now has a process for funding opportunities. She also reminded those present that June 19, 2024 is coming and that May is mental health awareness month. The goal is to break the stereotypes surrounding mental health.

Anderson stated that there is a substantial balance after current commitments are met of approximately \$400,000 in the millage funding. He proposed considering putting together a simple RFP that could be approved at the next meeting and then have it open for 30 days. Griffin stated that direct support is important, but staffing is also important; that is how the phone gets answered. Hooker likes the idea of a simple RFP; she doesn't like the application portal used by the County. Hooker also expressed that she does not know if any application for funding has to go through the Housing Director. Griffin stated that her organization gives alternate submission options, such as video submission. Dunten will put together a couple of options for RFPs that can be voted on at the next meeting.

Dunten stated that the second annual college signing date at Kalamazoo Public Schools will be held 9a-1p on May 10, 2024 at Arcadia.

Griffin stated that she appreciations the work that everyone is doing. As a result, there will now be another funding opportunity. It will not solve everything now, but we are doing the work.

Meeting Adjourned: 6:07 pm

Submitted by: Lisa Willcutt