I. Call to Order

Christina Blevins thanked everyone for attending the meeting, adding that Chairwoman Michelle Denise was in Nashville this week and sends her apologies. Christina added that unfortunately this was to be Councilwoman Denise’s last meeting, as she is not seeking re-election for a City Council seat in the upcoming election. Christina stated that, on behalf The Northeast Tennessee/Virginia Home Consortium Board of Directors, she will present a small gavel to Councilwoman Denise for her service to the Board.

Christina added that in addition to Councilwoman Denise being absent, Vice-Chairman Mark Haga is in California for a training this week and sends his apologies. Christina added that the By-laws for the Northeast Tennessee Virginia HOME Consortium do not address situations where both the Chair and Vice-Chair are absent. Christina stated she discussed the situation with City Attorney Danielle Kiser. Danielle advised that most other City boards and commissions follow Robert’s Rules for procedural matters. Robert’s Rules states that if the Chair and Vice-Chair are both absent, the secretary may call the meeting to order and the members who are present can elect a chair pro tem to preside during that meeting. Seeing that a quorum was present, Christina called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. on April 9, 2019, in the Bristol, Tennessee City Annex Building. Christina asked those present for nominations for today’s meeting chair. Ellen Tolton stated that she would be happy to lead us through the meeting today. Ambre Torbett made a motion for Ellen Tolton to serve as Chair pro tem for the Northeast Tennessee/Virginia Board meeting today; seconded by Adam Williams; motion carried unanimously.
II. Approval of Minutes

Chairwoman Tolton asked for any changes or corrections to the January 8, 2019 meeting minutes. Ambre Torbett made a motion to approve the meeting minutes for January 8, 2019 as presented; seconded by Adam Williams; motion carried unanimously.

III. FTDD Status of Projects – Bill Forrester & Rene’ Mann

Bill Forrester presented the updated HOME activity report that itemized available funding balances for each community as of April 9, 2019. Bill advised the Board that Bill Masoner, Housing Construction and Rehab Manager for FTDD, had been out sometime due to health reasons and unfortunately Mr. Masoner recently broke his Tibia Plateau. Bill added that he is unsure when Mr. Masoner will be able to come back to work; however the First Tennessee Development District is looking for another Project Manager to help during this time. Ambre Torbett mentioned that she has a possible prospect, and Bill asked for contact information.

Homeownership: Bill Forrester reviewed each communities’ funding and pointed out that Kingsport has $100,000 of homeownership funds earmarked for a Partner Project with Eastern Eight CDC.

Rehab/Reconstruction: Bill Forrester reviewed current available funding for rehab/reconstruction projects in each community. Bill noted that each community has projects in various stages and mentioned that Mr. Masoner’s absence has slowed down the Consortium’s Rehab and Reconstruction projects. Ellen Tolton discussed several applicants who she is going to help with Bristol, VA CDBG funding, and they can be removed from the Consortium wait list. Mayor Wells also asked about an applicant in Bluff City. Rene’ Mann discussed the situation and is working with Holston Habitat, or possibly Appalachian Service Project, and advised that she is still working on helping the applicant.

Partner Projects: None

CHDO: Rene’ Mann stated that she and Christina recently monitored Horizon CDC and reviewed several files. There might be a couple items to follow up on, but the files were in good shape. Christina also stated that it is public knowledge that Horizon is looking to sell their properties to Eastern Eight CDC. If, and when, this happens we will only have one local CHDO in the region. Ellen Tolton mentioned People Inc. in Bristol, VA, and she will follow-up with them and gauge interest. Ellen asked about CHDO funding amounts, and Christina stated that in 2018 there is $170,699.85. 2019 will be determined by the allocation, which we do not know at this time. Bill Forrester added that he doesn't have a specific time to get CHDO applications out yet but he is hopeful for June/July. Board then had discussion on area CHDO’s.

Mayor Wells asked about Mobile Homes and Tiny Homes. The Board discussed why the Consortium does not work on mobile or tiny homes, as they are not permanent dwellings. Several in the room added that they have multiple zoning issues.

Other: None
IV. Old Business

None

V. New Business

Draft 2019-20 Action Plan: Christina Blevins stated she recently emailed the Board the draft 2019 Action Plan and newspaper ad for review. The draft plan is based on the allocation amounts from HUD last year. Christina would like the Board to approve the Consortium activities, i.e. Homeownership, Rehab/Reconstruction, Admin and CHDO projects today, then when the allocation is known from HUD Christina will ask each community where they wish to put their respective funding dollars. She asked each community to diligently review the Balance of Funds handout from FTDD, also she stated that things come up during the year and transfers are allowed up to 20% of the total allocation, but note that once that 20% is reached the board will not be able to approve additional transfers. Christina discussed the community percentages that have been used for several years. Ambre Torbett stated she didn’t think the community percentages needed to change as our local demographics haven’t really changed. Christina stated that the numbers presented to the Board may be a little different from the numbers given from FTDD. This is because FTDD numbers are in real time and her numbers are after invoices have been paid.

Ambre Torbett motioned to approve activities and community percentages as presented in the draft 2019 Action Plan; seconded by Mayor Wells; motion carried unanimously.

Christina mentioned that she presented the draft Action Plan to Bristol, TN City Council on April 2, 2019 and held the second required Public Hearing at that time. No comments were received from the public at either of the Public Hearings, the public comment period is open until May 2, 2019. Bristol, VA, Kingsport and Johnson City will each also have public hearings for their respective CDBG and HOME projects.

Fair Housing Month and National Community Development Week: Christina Blevins mentioned that April is National Fair Housing month and National Community Development week is April 21 – April 27. She asked that if any communities were planning on having events or celebrations to let her know and she would send the information to HUD to help promote.

Updating the Policy & Procedures Program Manual for Rehab/Reconstruction Procurement: Christina Blevins stated that HOME Consortium is still having major issues with Contractors bidding on projects. Christina described a recent scenario where the Consortium placed an ad in the newspaper, sent letters to contractors, personally reached out to contractors, and put information up on the FTDD website and only had one bidder. She added that they decided to re-bid the projects again and did everything a second time and still only had one bidder on the projects. Christina said after that she called the HUD Knoxville Field Office and was advised to amend the Consortium’s current Policy & Procedures. Christina reviewed the current Policy and the proposed Policy for Procurement of Bids.

Current Policy for Procurement of Bids-
The Consortium, through its Administrative Agent, will advertise openly and publicly for bids and encourage minority and female-owned firms to bid on its projects. Contractors will be required to attend and participate in a pre-bid walk-through of the property. Three bids are preferred; however, if only two bids are received and they are within 10% of the job estimate, the Administrative Agent would have the discretion to accept one of the two bids.

Proposed Policy for Procurement of Bids:
The Consortium, through its Administrative Agent, will advertise openly and publicly for bids and encourage minority and female-owned firms to bid on its projects. Contractors will be required to attend and participate in a pre-bid walk-through of the property. Three bids are preferred; however, if only two bids are received and they are within 10% of the job estimate, the Administrative Agent would have the discretion to accept one of the two bids. In cases where only one bid is received in response to an invitation for bids, such bid may be considered and accepted if the Administrative Agent makes a written determination that: (a) The specifications were clear and not unduly restrictive; (b) adequate competition was solicited and it could have been reasonably assumed that more than one bid could have been submitted; (c) the price is reasonable; and (d) the bid is otherwise in accordance with the invitation for bids. Such a determination shall be placed in the file.

Bill Forrester agreed with Christina and feels that contractors have been, and will, continue to be a problem for the HOME program. He was hopeful that additional contractors would start bidding, but thus far the Consortium has not been able to get new contractors bidding on the projects.

Christina added that the Consortium is still going to try for multiple bids on each project; however, if we can’t get them this amendment will allow us to move forward on the project, even if we only have one bidder.

Motion to approve amending the current Northeast Tennessee/Virginia HOME Consortium Policies and Procedures to reflect the proposed Policy for Procurement of Bids as presented today by Adam Williams; seconded by Ambre Torbett; motion carried unanimously.

VI. Announcements & Adjournment

ARCH Point-In-Time Homeless Count: Christina mentioned that she does not have final numbers on the PIT count that was conducted in January at this time. She is expecting to have the information from ARCH and present it during the board meeting in July.

Next Board Meeting: Chairwoman Tolton announced the next Board meeting is scheduled for July 9, 2019.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Christina Blevins, Recorder

Ellen Tolton, Pro Tem Chairwoman