

## **ANNUAL REPORT MARCH 31,2013**

**AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY  
33 KELLOGG AVENUE  
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS**

***Constance Kruger, Chair  
Peter Jessop, Vice Chair  
Paul Bobrowski, Treasurer  
Judy Brooks, Assistant Treasurer  
Laura Quinn, Member***

***Denise LeDuc, Executive Director***

**AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY  
33 KELLOGG AVENUE  
AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS 01002**

**ANNUAL REPORT AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY**

The Amherst Housing Authority respectfully submits its Annual Report to the citizens of the Town of Amherst, Mr. Aaron Gornstein, Undersecretary of the state Department of Housing and Community Development, the Secretary's Representative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and State Auditor Suzanne Bump for the year ending March 31, 2013.

The members and staff of the Amherst Housing Authority reaffirm their continued commitment to serve all the citizens of Amherst, including those who reside in the several buildings that the Authority owns and also AHA tenants who reside in privately owned buildings in the Town of Amherst, and the voucher holders of the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program.

Sincerely,

Constance Kruger  
Chair

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

The voters of the Town of Amherst elect four members of the Board at large and the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts appoints one member. All members serve five-year terms. The members establish policies regulating the operation of the Amherst Housing Authority. Regular Board meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month in the community room at Ann Whalen Apartments, or at other times as scheduled. Members of the Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners are:

<b>Commissioner</b>	<b>Term Expiration</b>
Paul Bobrowski	April 2015
Constance Kruger(Governor's Appointee)	May 2017
Laura Quinn	April 2017
Peter Jessop	April 2014

In April 2012, Laura Quinn was elected to a 5 year term. Peter Jessop is the Authority's appointee to the Town's Community Preservation Act committee.

At their annual meeting in April, Constance Kruger was elected Chair, Peter Jessop Vice Chair, Paul Bobrowski Treasurer, and Judy Brooks Assistant Treasurer.

## **AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HIGHLIGHTS**

During the past year, the AHA began implementation of the Capital Plan through the Department of Housing and Community Development with numerous high impact projects. Prior to year-end the Capital Plan was revisited and priorities established based on changes that occurred during the year. A new contract with DHCD for a 3 year period was signed in the amount of \$1,005,271.

### **Modernization Projects:**

This has been a busy year for the AHA, with many projects completed, underway, or with upfront work to develop the project and have it queued in the pipeline. Funding sources include the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Amherst's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), WMECO and Berkshire Gas' Low Income Weatherization Services, and the Town of Amherst - Community Preservation Act (CPA)

- The first phase of the 705 Rehabilitation project began was completed in December 2012 with the four units located at Olympia Drive that was funded through a CDBG grant from the Town of Amherst in the amount of \$363,846. Two of these units had been offline due to the extensive repairs needed.
- The second phase of the 705 Rehabilitation project began in December, 2012 and will continue through August of 2013. Renovations in 17 family units involve complete kitchen and

bathroom upgrades as well as lighting and flooring improvements. The budget for this project is \$1,268,482 and is being financed by various funding sources; DHCD, CPA and AHA formula funding under the DHCD Capital improvement plan.

- The AHA received a grant from Amherst's CDBG funds for \$95,000 to replace doors and half of the windows, along with a new automated door opener at Jean Elder, a project that was completed in March, 2013.
- As part of its Vacant Unit Turnover Initiative, DHCD awarded the AHA \$15,975 to complete the renovation of an apartment on Jenks Street. This apartment was ready and leased up at the end of March, 2013.
- The AHA is receiving \$120,863 as part of its Capital Funding from DHCD to replace the Emergency Generator and Switchgears at the Ann Whalen Apartments, and will tie-in the community room kitchen. This project will begin in May, 2013.
- 55 refrigerators at the Ann Whalen Apartments were replaced with new Energy Star appliances through the WMECO's weatherization services at no cost to the AHA.
- The two kitchens at 34/36 Sunrise Avenue are in the process of being renovated at a cost of \$20,250 through AHA's reserve funds.
- Eight electric load panels were replaced at Watson Farms through HUD's capital funds in February, 2013
- The AHA anticipates funding from the WMECO/Berkshire Gas weatherization services to install new boilers at Sunrise Avenue. This project will begin the summer of 2013.
- Berkshire Gas has committed \$67,000 toward the replacement of the boiler at Ann Whalen Apartments. The balance of the funds will come from the DHCD Capital Fund.

Our capital plan was approved by the Board at the March 2013 meeting and subsequently sent to DHCD for approval.

#### Pomeroy Lane Cooperative

The Authority completed the second year of the management agreement with Pomeroy Lane Cooperative and has agreed to renew the management contract for an additional year.

#### Main Street

The Authority continued its current management agreement with Valley Main Street LLC.

The AHA continues to improve its existing management, maintenance, and rental assistance programs and to emphasize preventative maintenance. In addition to the actual day-to-day management, maintenance, and administration of the Authority's programs, the AHA staff provides information to the general public and to local and state agencies and boards.

# **AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF**

## **Administrative Personnel**

Executive Director	Denise LeDuc
Director of Asset Management	Nancy Schroeder
Director of Housing Programs	Debbie Turgeon
Assistant Housing Manager	Chris Warren
Program Specialist	Angela Russell
Staff Accountant	Clara Rowan
Support Service Coordinator	Juana Trujillo
Housing Specialist	Janna Tetreault
Applications Clerk	Eleanor Mielosyk *
Recertification Clerk	Joan Bechtold *

## **Maintenance Personnel**

Maintenance Mechanic	John Summers
Maintenance Laborer	Marc Fleury
Groundskeeper/Custodian	Dana Glazier
Maintenance Laborer	Chad Howard

## **Contract Staff**

Fee Accountant	Gary DePace
Counsel-State Programs	Patricia LaFore, Esq.

\* Part-time

## AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING

<b>NAME OF BUILDING</b>	<b># OF UNITS</b>	<b>FUNDING TYPE</b>	<b>BUILDING NUMBER</b>	<b>DATE OF OCCUPANCY</b>
<u>ELDERLY/ HANDICAPPED</u>				
Chestnut Court Apts.	30	State	667-1	1962
Ann Whalen Apts.	80	State	667-2	1975
Jean Elder House	23	State-Private	667-3	1980
<u>FAMILY</u>				
Watson Farms Apts.	15	Federal	085-1	1982
Stanley St.	2	State	705-2	1988
Jenks St.	4	State	705-3	1989
Olympia Drive	4	State	705-1	1992
Fairfield St.	6	State	705-1	1992
Bridge St./ Market Hill	6	State	705-1	1992
99 Bridge Street	4	Private	Section 8 vouchers	2003
Tamarack Drive	4	Private	Section 8 vouchers	2006
<u>HANDICAPPED</u>				
John C. Nutting	5	State	689-1	1981
Moreau House	8	State	698-2	1990
<b>TOTAL UNITS OWNED</b>	<b>191</b>			

## HOUSING UNDER MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

<b>NAME OF BUILDING</b>	<b># OF UNITS</b>	<b>FUNDING TYPE</b>	<b>BUILDING NUMBER</b>	<b>DATE OF OCCUPANCY</b>
Valley Main Street 683/687	11	Private	Section 8 Vouchers and HOME	2008
Pomeroy Lane Cooperative	25	<b>Private</b>	Section 8 Vouchers & Market Rents	2011 (management contract)
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>36</b>			

## **RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNDER CONTRACT**

<b>NAME OF PROGRAM</b>	<b>UNITS</b>	<b>TYPE</b>
Section 8 Rental	413	Federal
Mass. Rental Voucher Program **	10	State
Department of Mental Health Subsidy Program	3	State
Federal Public Housing	15	Federal
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>441</b>	

\*\* Six (6) vouchers are currently frozen by DHCD

### **Maintenance/Capital Improvements**

The maintenance staff prepared 16 vacant units for occupancy and completed a total of 759 work orders. The staff also maintains the grounds and buildings at the Authority's fifteen properties that the AHA own and or manages.

The AHA continues to improve its existing management, maintenance, and rental assistance programs and to emphasize preventative maintenance. In addition to the actual day-to-day management, maintenance, and administration of the Authority's programs, the AHA staff provides information to the general public and to local and state agencies and boards.

### **Management**

The Authority maintained 7 waiting lists. The waiting lists for state-aided elderly and disabled housing and family housing are open, as is the waiting list for Pomeroy Lane Cooperative. The waiting lists for Watson Farms, Main Street, Bridge Street, /Tamarack Drive were closed as of April 12, 2011 due to the high number of applicants on each list.

As of March 31, 2013, the only vacant units in the AHA portfolio are two apartments at Olympia Drive which are being used to relocate tenants during the 705 Modernization Project, and one 705 unit in poor condition which will be renovated later in the Spring as part of the Modernization project.

AHA staff processed 185 income recertification's for state aided tenants; signed leases with 16 new households residing in AHA owned property and conducted 196 unit inspections.

## **Rental Assistance Programs**

The AHA administers four rental assistance programs: the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), and the Department of Mental Health Subsidy Program all funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development. All of these programs permit eligible households to occupy privately owned units. The Authority pays part of the monthly rent directly to the owner. Over 172 owners participate in the programs.

AHA staff issued 11 Section 8 Housing Choice vouchers, completed annual and interim income recertification's for program participants, and leased 36 new families on the program. The Authority also completed 3 MRVP income recertifications. In FY 2013 AHA returned to full leasing of its program and used \$80,000 of HAP reserves to keep the portfolio fully leased.

During this year a local complex that has been affordable to participants in the Housing Choice Voucher Program was sold to another entity, with the new entity raising the rents to a level that the majority of the renters will be required to seek other units. The units although they were affordable did not have any subsidy or affordability restrictions. Situations like this continue to reinforce that Amherst is a difficult community for low-income residents to obtain affordable housing.

The AHA had begun to respond to the residents of a local complex, Rolling Green Apartments, whose affordability restrictions are coming to an end to help residents understand what options they might have available to them.

There were 428 housing inspections completed during the year which include annual, move- in, and special inspections of units leased through the Section 8 and conventional housing programs.

The Authority received a 100% high performer rating by HUD for the Section 8 Management Assistance Program.

## **Resident Services**

A primary goal for the Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) is to create a supportive environment for our elderly tenants so they can live at home as long as possible. A coalition of tenants, AHA staff and community people created the Wellness Program to address the issues of aging in place for AHA elderly tenants.

The Amherst Housing Authority (AHA) has a proven track record of successfully running a Wellness Program. Funding from Highland Valley Elder Services enables the AHA to offer this program which provides free nutritious breakfast, health screens, home visits, massage therapy and a variety of lectures and health related presentations. Lisa White, Town Nurse holds weekly clinics, providing blood pressure screening and health information. Home visits are made to tenants that are homebound.



## Mixed Population Service Coordination

	Elderly	Young/ disabled	Total
New Cases Served this period	6	3	9
Total cases served			383
<b><u>Service Type</u></b>			
Benefit Assistance	175	159	334
Case Management	212	125	337
Domestic Violence Issue	40	65	105
Drug/Alcohol Problem	72	135	207
Employment/Voc. Services	280	125	405
Financial Problem	255	235	490
Group Activities/Function	405	210	615
Health and Safety Threats	225	110	335
Hoarding	180	145	325
Home/Healthcare Provider	390	235	625
Housekeeping	235	245	480
Individual Information Sharing	415	225	640
Isolation Problem	150	145	295
Language Related	375	215	590
Lease Related Issues	80	80	160
Legal Issues	40	12	52
Maintenance Problems	45	45	90
Medical Problems	390	175	565
Mental Health Problems	340	215	555
Mental Retardation Problem	180	175	355
Neighbor Dispute	165	160	325
Nursing Home Placement	105	25	130
Nutrition Related	385	260	645
Personal Hygiene	345	260	645
Reasonable Accommodation Issue	95	90	185
Rent Arrears Issue	0	0	0
Tenant Move	135	95	230
Transportation Problem	245	225	470
Unauthorized Guest	180	170	350
Other	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6139</b>	<b>4361</b>	<b>10,500</b>

The AHA sponsors a variety of educational/entertainment/social activities, including:

- UMASS students from the Newman Center prepare and service a home cooked lunch one Sunday of the month.
- Weekly evening bible study classes on Monday nights.
- Yoga and Strength Training every Tuesday and Thursday
- Crafts every other Wednesday of the month
- An Alcoholic Anonymous group for residents and community people meets daily at Ann Whalen.
- Monthly birthday celebrations for tenant's birthdays
- Musical concerts once a month
- Sunday morning multi-cultural/non - denominational services
- Holiday potlucks
- Tenant run/management supported picnics/cookout

Collaboration with other town and social service agencies has been key in establishing successful services/programs for Amherst Housing Authority tenants. Our local partners include:

- Amherst Survival Center – The AHA works closely with the Survival Center, referring tenants for an array of social services. This includes the free clinic, noon time free lunch, and clothing. The AHA also coordinates the Survival Center's food distribution program at Ann Whalen and Chestnut Court
- Amherst Senior Center – Professional partnerships have been developed with Maura Plante, Social Worker at the Senior Center. The partnership enables staff at the AHA and Senior Center to assist tenants with many issues, including elders at risk, referrals to doctors, hospitals and nursing homes.
- University of Massachusetts – Student volunteers from the Newman Center prepare lunch for Ann Whalen tenants once a month.
- Elms College School of Nursing – Student nurses held a wellness clinic at Chestnut Court and served free hot lunch to tenants.
- Amherst College – the AHA participates in the “friendly visitor” program where elders are matched with students. Students visit elders and spend time together, in the elders' home or in the community.
- Highland Valley Elder Service –The AHA refers tenants for Meals on Wheels, PCA and homemaker services offered by Highland Valley.

- Center for Human Development – Case managers are assigned 2 or 3 tenants that would benefit from counseling and case management .
- Department of Mental Health – Case management and ongoing counseling is provided to tenant in need of these services.
- Senior Aide Program – AHA has participated in this program for more than 6 years. The Breakfast Program Aide position is funded through Senior Aide Program.
- Franklin County Home Care Corp. – Home Care Services assists tenants to stay in their own home or return there after a hospital or nursing home stay.

Social Service Coordinator, Juana Trujillo – is an active member of the Council on Aging (COA) and the Senior Health Advisory Group (SHAG), both of which meet once a month.

### **Staff Development and Involvement**

Denise LeDuc, Executive Director received her certification as a Massachusetts Public Housing Manager during the fiscal year, and has attended several trainings relevant to public housing and development. Denise also serves on the Town of Amherst’s Housing and Sheltering Committee and continues involvement with the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness, and the Western Massachusetts Executive Directors Association.

Debbie Turgeon, Director of Housing Programs received her certification in Executive Management on the Housing Choice Voucher Program from Nan McKay. Angela Russell and Janna Tetreault, of the Leased Housing Department received certification in the Housing Choice Voucher Occupancy area through Nan McKay, and attended Section 8 Administrators trainings in their field. Staff continues to attend relevant training in program administration and professional development.

Board members Constance Kruger and Laura Quinn attended Commissioner trainings through Mass NAHRO, and Ms. Quinn attended an in-depth commissioner training led by Leo Dauwer. In addition, the AHA provided access to online professional development for all staff and board members desiring to increase their knowledge base in relation to housing and housing management issues.