

ANNUAL REPORT MARCH 31, 2016

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

Judy Brooks, Chair

Laura Quinn, Vice Chair

TracyLee Boutilier, Treasurer

Peter Jessop, Assistant Treasurer

Constance Kruger, Governor's Appointee, 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, Ms. Chrystal Kornegay, Undersecretary of the Massachusetts 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, 2016.

The Amherst Housing Authority Board of Commissioners and staff continue to reaffirm their continued commitment to serve all the citizens of Amherst, and is not limited to those who reside in the several buildings that the Authority owns, the AHA tenants who reside in privately owned buildings in the Town of Amherst, and voucher holders of the Federal Housing Choice Voucher Program, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts Voucher Programs.

Sincerely,

Judy Brooks
Chair

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Amherst Housing Authority was organized under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 121B where 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:

Commissioner	Term Expiration
Judy Brooks	April 2016
Laura Quinn	April 2017
Constance Kruger (Governor's Appointee)	May 2017
Peter Jessop	April 2019
TracyLee Boutilier	April 2020

At their April Annual Meeting Judy Brooks was elected Chair, Laura Quinn Vice Chair, TracyLee Boutilier Treasurer, Peter Jessop Assistant Treasurer and Constance Kruger Member. Peter Jessop was reelected as the Authority's appointee to the Town's Community Preservation Act Committee.

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HIGHLIGHTS

The Amherst Housing Authority is pleased to provide you with the following highlights of the programs and projects and our accomplishments during the fiscal year ended, March 31, 2016.

Modernization Projects:

The AHA continues to be successful in its pursuit of state and local funding. During this fiscal year the following projects were in process or completed.

- The installation of a heating and hot water system at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2) reached final completion in 2015. A funding offset in the amount of \$65,000 was acquired from Berkshire Gas.
- Renovations of kitchens and some baths at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2) is in process. The project is currently in a short term break while MEP engineers design a change of scope to the electrical plans. The renovations will resume during spring 2016. This HILAPP project has \$110,000 of local CPA funds and \$173,829.57 of CDBG funds, with up to a 2:1 match by DHCD.
- Renovation of all five wheelchair accessible apartments at John Nutting (689-1) is currently in process. This HILAPP project has a combination of DOER funds \$241,243, HILAPP funds,

vacancy funds for a project total of \$822,842.44. This project was initially proposed to have a geo-thermal system; however the bid for the geo-thermal exceeded the project budget and was removed from the scope. The first phase of this project (three of the five units) will be completed on April 30, 2016. The scope of this project includes the upgrading of the lighting and electrical systems, new HVAC and domestic hot water heaters, refurbishing of kitchen cabinets and counter-tops, renovation of bathrooms and handicap accessible shower areas, replacement of Trombe wall system with new solar air collectors, and replacement of exterior doors and windows. This project will be completed mid-summer 2016.

- A new foundation drainage system was installed at three of the five Chestnut Court apartment buildings (667-1). The drainage system addresses the problem of standing water in the crawlspaces of these three buildings. Phase one of this project was completed fall 2015 and included the new drainage system, as well as the repaving of sidewalks, parking lots and the roadways on the property. The areas disturbed by the excavation process were replenished with an assortment of new plantings including trees, shrubs and flowering bushes. Phase two of this project will include the final top-coat paving of the sidewalk areas which will be completed during spring 2016.
- The installation of a camera surveillance system was completed during the fall 2015 at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2). This project cost \$12,290. The camera system was installed at all exterior entrances to the building and in the common areas within the building. Remote access monitoring allows AHA staff to view and review any unsolicited persons gaining access in and around the building, adding an element of security for our elderly tenant population. A noteworthy item is the AHA was the first (and so far only LHA) to be successful in obtaining a security system for an elderly/disabled state project.
- Renovations of two bathrooms at 34 – 36 Sunrise Avenue (689-2) is set to begin during Spring 2016. This project addresses an issue that occurred where a second floor bathtub had leaked into the unit below. The scope includes new shower, flooring, and waterproofing of a second floor bathroom as well as minor renovations of a first floor bathroom. The contract for this project will be awarded in April 2016.
- The AHA applied for and received FY'15 Health and Safety Funds. The funds were used to complete repairs to three catch basins at one of our 705 properties on Fairfield Street (705-1B) and the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2). These funds were also used to take care of extensive tree trimming at Chestnut Court (667-1), in an effort to keep the property safe from falling trees/limbs. This project was completed during the summer 2015 for a project cost of \$22,581.92.
- The AHA has been granted CDBG funds through the Town of Amherst (a mini-entitlement community) in the amount of \$162,980 to renovate two apartments, one wheelchair accessible bathroom and flooring in the common hallways of the Jean Elder Building (667-3). This project is currently in the design phase and is scheduled to go out to bid in spring 2016. Construction of this project will be completed by fall 2016. While the architect was putting together the plans and specifications for this project, it was noted that there was a possibility of asbestos in the flooring which may need to be abated. The abatement costs were not sought from the CDBG grant. The AHA contacted DHCD to discuss the concerns and the AHA has received a verbal approval from

DHCD that they have a separate allocation of funding that will cover the costs of the abatement since the AHA secured the funds to do the project from another source.

- Emergency repairs to the large-capacity elevator at the Ann Whalen Building (667-2). In March 2016 the large-capacity elevator was brought under a full-load test (3500 lbs.) during the annual State Inspection. During the test the elevator sprung a hydraulic oil leak in the piston and was taken out of service. The elevator piston will be replaced under the DCAMM Emergency Waiver process during spring 2016. This project is currently in the bidding stage and has estimated construction costs of \$55,000 - \$150,000.
- Replacement of five boilers at Chestnut Court (667-1) is currently in process. This project is being completed in phases; phase one included the installation of a new high-efficiency boiler and indirect water heater in building #1 of the Chestnut Court Property in the amount of \$24,450. AHA received a funding offset via an energy credit from Berkshire Gas in the amount of \$9,920. Phase one was completed in January 2016 under a DCAMM emergency waiver. Phase two includes the replacement of the boilers and domestic hot water heaters in buildings #2 through #5. The existing boilers and water heaters will be replaced with high efficiency boilers and indirect hot water heaters. Phase two has estimated construction costs of \$100,000 - \$125,000. AHA will receive additional energy credits, estimated at about \$40,000, to offset construction costs. Phase two is currently in the design phase and is scheduled to be completed during the summer 2016.
- Installation of a ductless split heating and air conditioning system will be installed in the fifth floor community room of the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2). This project is in the bidding stage and has an estimated construction cost of \$20,000. The installation will be completed during the spring 2016.

The following projects have received funding approval during this fiscal year and are in queue to be done in the near future:

- AHA has received an award for low-flow toilets under the DHCD Sustainability Program in the amount of \$26,000. The project is to replace 26 toilets at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2) and 10 toilets at the John Nutting Apartments (689-1).
- Removal of an underground de-commissioned oil tank and restoration of a retaining wall at the Jean Elder Apartments (667-3). Construction costs are estimated at \$39,125.
- Upgrades to the fire control system at the Chestnut Court apartment buildings (667-1). The project will include the replacement of the heat detectors and the fire control panel at the development. Construction costs are estimated at \$35,000.
- AHA has applied for CDBG grant funds through the Town of Amherst (a mini-entitlement community) in the amount of \$112,549 for the replacement of 30 casement windows in the bathrooms of the Chestnut Court apartment buildings (667-1), and modifications to two handicap accessible units at the Watson Farms Federal Property (085).

The AHA rolling five-year capital plan was approved by the Board of Commissioners at the March 2016 meeting and subsequently sent to DHCD for approval. Two residents participated in the discussion of the capital plan and other residents received information. The following items are on the plan for the near future:

- Site lighting replacement at the Chestnut Court apartment buildings (667-1)
- Exterior walkway replacement at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2)
- Replacement of the back patio at the Sunrise Avenue property (689-2)
- Site lighting replacement at the Sunrise Avenue property (689-2)
- Replacement of interior floor finishes at the Sunrise Avenue property (689-2)
- Insulation of exposed plumbing line at the Ann Whalen Apartments (667-2)
- Complete elevator upgrade at the Jean Elder building (667-3)
- Site lighting replacement at the Jean Elder building (667-3)
- Living room and bedroom window replacement at the Ann Whalen building (667-2)

Management at the AHA will continue to look for available community resources to identify funds to address additional capital improvement projects.

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY STAFF

Administrative Personnel

Executive Director	Denise LeDuc
Director of Housing Programs	Debbie Turgeon
Asset Manager	Chad Howard
Housing Manager	Vacant (Debbie Turgeon assuming duties)
Assistant Housing Manager	Molly Sullivan
Staff Accountant	Clara Rowan
Leased Housing Administrator	Erin Guzowski
Leased Housing Representative	Angela Russell
Leased Housing Clerk	Antonio Laudati **
Social Services Coordinator	Juana Trujilo **
Applications Clerk	Eleanor Killeen **
Housing Inspector/Tenant Relocation Coordinator	Sidney Watson **

Maintenance Personnel

Maintenance Mechanic/Foreman	John Summers
Maintenance Mechanic	Pedro Ortega
Groundskeeper/Custodian	Dana Glazier
Maintenance Laborer	Andrew Howard

Contract Staff

Fee Accountants	Chaput & Feeney, LLP
Counsel-State Programs	Patricia LaFore, Esq.

** Part-time

AMHERST HOUSING AUTHORITY HOUSING

NAME OF BUILDING	# OF UNITS	FUNDING TYPE	BUILDING NUMBER	DATE OF OCCUPANCY
<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	689-2	1990
TOTAL UNITS OWNED	191			

HOUSING UNDER MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

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

Maintenance/Improvements

The maintenance staff prepared 22 vacant units and completed a total of 1,212 work orders. The staff also maintains the grounds and buildings at the Authority's fifteen properties that the AHA owns and or manages.

The AHA continues to emphasize preventative maintenance, and through annual inspections of the units the staff is able to address areas that are in need, or may become an issue. During the upcoming year the AHA will be updating the preventative maintenance plan.

Property Management meetings are held weekly to discuss and map out a plan for maintenance and unit turnovers to ensure that both property management and maintenance are working together on the priorities of each development.

Management

The Authority maintains 9 waiting lists, all of which are currently open. Every two years the AHA updates the waiting lists to ensure that people who have applied are still interested in remaining on the waiting lists, and the AHA will be conducting a waiting list update in the spring of 2016. Currently there are a total of 2,457 waiting list applicants, 381 are applicants for elderly/disabled housing and 1,874 have applied for family housing.

As of March 31, 2016, the following 25 units that are owned or managed by the AHA were vacant: 14 units at Ann Whalen Apartments (these are being held open for relocation during renovation) 3 units at John C. Nutting which are undergoing rehabilitation with the first phase scheduled to be completed for April 30, 2016. There are 2 units at the Jean Elder apartments and the project drawings for renovations are in process.

The AHA staff processed 113 income recertification's and 15 interim reexaminations for state aided tenants; signed leases with 2 new households residing in AHA owned properties and conducted 174 unit inspections.

Pomeroy Lane Cooperative

The Authority completed the fifth year of the management agreement with Pomeroy Lane Cooperative. The AHA conducted 25 property inspections and completed 7 annual recertifications for non-subsidized tenants.

Main Street

The Authority continued its current management agreement with Valley Main Street LLC for the 11 affordable housing units. The AHA conducted 1 annual recertification for a non-subsidized tenant.

In addition to the day-to-day management, maintenance, and administration of the Authority's

programs, the AHA staff provides information to the general public, local and state agencies and various boards on the services the AHA provides.

Rental Assistance Programs

The AHA administers four rental assistance programs: the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) 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 (DMH) all funded by the Department of Housing and Community Development. All of these programs permit eligible households to occupy privately owned units, with the Authority paying part of the monthly rent directly to the owner. The AHA issued checks to the approximately 143 owners participating in the various programs each month through direct deposit.

On December 11, 2015 HUD finalized the Fair Market Rents for the Springfield MA MSA, with Amherst and the communities of Hampshire County all included in this MSA. The participants who reside in Amherst continue to struggle with high rents as the high number of students residing off campus from the University of MA- Amherst significantly impacts the available housing units, leaving very few affordable units for low income families. In recognition of this, the AHA has continued to apply for a Payment Exception rent of 120% of the HUD FMR for the community of Amherst; HUD subsequently approving the Payment Exception rent and the caveat that the AHA must have sufficient funding in order to implement the HUD approved exception rent. At their board meeting on December 28, 2015 the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the following payment standards:

BDRM. SIZE	Town of Amherst	Extended area communities of Granby, Hadley, South Hadley & Belchertown
0	\$715	\$614
1	\$907	\$778
2	\$1,131	\$970
3	\$1,403	\$1,204
4	\$1,650	\$1,417

Based on projected funding from HUD for calendar year 2016, the payment standards were set at 113% of the FMR for the Springfield MSA, which will provide a small increase over the previous payment standards. Even at these increased payment standards it is extremely difficult for program participants to find affordable housing in the community of Amherst, causing program participants to leave the community should they wish to relocate to a new apartment, or causing tenants who are housed in the community to pay additional rental costs due to the units costing more than the payment standard.

The average housing assistance payment in calendar year 2015 was \$652.89 per voucher month on lease, showing a drop to \$636.03 in March of 2016. During the fiscal year there were 21 families who ended participation in the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

During FY16 there were 38 new admissions in the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program and 1 Project Based. The Leased Housing staff processed 425 annual recertifications and 274 interim recertifications for the Housing Choice Voucher Program. The AHA issued 62 vouchers to applicants with 39 leasing up during the fiscal year. In addition 15 annual recertifications were completed for Watson Farms, with 8 interim recertifications and 1 new admission.

During this fiscal year, 350 annual Housing Quality Standard (HQS) inspections were completed for the HCV program along with 39 move-in inspections; AHA began conducting biennial inspections for units that met the criteria that was established. In addition, the AHA conducted 15 HQS inspections for Watson Farms.

The Authority continues to receive a high performer rating by HUD for the Section 8 Management Assessment Program. (SEMAP)

The AHA received an allocation of 20 Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) vouchers from DHCD when additional funding and vouchers were made available to some housing authorities in the state. The AHVP program provides rental vouchers to non-elderly (under age 60) disabled applicants who would have been eligible for Chapter 667 (elderly/disabled) housing under DHCD. As of March 31, 2016, 7 vouchers were issued to applicants; and 2 applicants successfully leased up in housing units. During the next several months the balance of the vouchers will be issued to qualified applicants to find suitable affordable housing.

The AHA continues to work with local vendors who provide vouchers to qualified Department of Mental Health(DMH) participants for housing, The AHA currently has 12 vouchers through DMH, with all 12 vouchers having annual reexaminations during the year; 7 in addition to their reexams also had interim reexams.

After several years of the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) dwindling down due to a freeze from DHCD on reissuance, DHCD lifted the freeze and the AHA was once again allowed to reissue vouchers to qualified applicants. All 10 vouchers that the AHA has access to are mobile vouchers which allows qualified applicants to find affordable units in the private housing market that meet state sanitary code. During the fiscal year there was 1 new admission into the MRVP program with 7 annual reexaminations and 8 interim reexams. The AHA has issued 2 MRVP vouchers to qualified applicants, 1 of the vouchers leased up on 4/1/16 and the other is searching for an affordable unit.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNDER CONTRACT

As of 3/31/16

NAME OF PROGRAM	UNITS	TYPE
Section 8 Rental (413) Max	403	Federal
Mass. Rental Voucher Program ** (10) Max	8	State
Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) (20) Potential	2	State
Department of Mental Health Subsidy Program	12	State
Federal Public Housing	15	Federal
TOTAL	440	

** Vouchers were un-frozen by DHCD allowing more families to obtain housing assistance.

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

- Participating in Nutritional workshops, Cooking Matters, led by UMass nutrition majors.
- Partnered with the VNA/ Cooley Dickinson Hospital's Geriatric Services. The goal of the program is to address the complex needs of older adults, focus on health and promotion, prevent and manage diseases and disabilities in the 55+ population.
- An Alcoholic Anonymous group for residents and community people meets daily at Ann Whalen's community room.
- Weekly evening bible study classes on Monday nights.
- Chair exercise for the elderly
- Crafts every other Wednesday of the month
- Bingo with UMASS Students on Saturday
- Sunday morning multi-cultural/non - denominational services
- Holiday potlucks
- Tenant run/management supported picnics/cookout

- Survival Center – food distribution
- Sr. Aide Program
- Franklin/Hampshire County Home Care participant

In this past fiscal year the Ann Whalen Tenant Organization sponsored a musical event that was open to the public.

Collaboration with 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 continue with Maura Plante and Helen MacMellon, both Social Workers at the Senior Center. This 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.
- Highland Valley Elder Service –The AHA refers tenants for Meals on Wheels, PCA and homemaker services offered by Highland Valley. We have also partnered with Highland Valley to identify elders at risk, and request coordination of services for these elders.
- Department of Mental Health – Ongoing case management and mental health counseling is provided to tenants in need of these services.
- Senior Aide Program-The AHA has partnered with this program for the past six (6) years
- Franklin County Home Care Corp.- Networking with FCHCC to help residents to stay in their homes, or return to their homes after a hospitalization or nursing home stay.

The AHA Resident Services Coordinator, Juana Trujillo, routinely assists the elderly/disabled populations with assistance in the form of referrals, coordination and direct involvement on the following areas of need:

- Benefit Assistance
- Case Management
- Domestic Violence Issue
- Drug/Alcohol Problem
- Employment/Voc. Services
- Financial Problem
- Group Activities/Function
- Health and Safety Threats
- Hoarding
- Home/Healthcare Provider

Housekeeping
Individual Information Sharing
Isolation Problem
Language Related
Lease Related Issues
Legal Issues
Maintenance Problems
Medical Problems
Mental Health Problems
Mental Retardation Problem
Neighbor Dispute
Nursing Home Placement
Nutrition Related
Personal Hygiene
Reasonable Accommodation Issues
Rent Arrearage Issues
Tenant Move
Transportation Problem
Unauthorized Guest

Personnel, and Community Involvement

The AHA welcomed three new staff this year. Assistant Housing Manager, Molly Sullivan came onboard in June with five years of part-time experience with the Dedham Housing Authority. Molly worked during school breaks and summer vacations and had experience with the software used by the AHA. Leased Housing Clerk, Antonio Laudati was hired in September to provide clerical assistance to the leased housing staff. Maintenance Laborer Andrew Howard was hired in November and has 25 years' experience in property maintenance.

The AHA saw one long-time employee retire, and former Maintenance Laborer, Chad Howard was promoted to Asset Manager. Chad has over 6 years' experience in maintenance, and a good knowledge base of the capital needs issues of the AHA properties. Chad is in the process of obtaining certification with the Office of the Inspector General.

Denise LeDuc serves on the Town of Amherst's Housing and Sheltering Committee, and is a member of the following organizations: Western Massachusetts Executive Director's Association; MassNAHRO; CHAPA; NAHRO; and the Western Massachusetts Coalition to End Homelessness.

Juana Trujillo is an active member of the Council on Aging (COA) and the Senior Health Advisory Group (SHAG), both of which meet monthly. Juana will be attending a comprehensive SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) workshop in the spring.