

Members present:	Kevin M. McCormick	John W. Hadley
	Christopher A. Rucho	Michael J. Kittredge, Jr.
Members absent:	Siobhan M. Bohnson	

Mr. McCormick convened the special meeting of the Board, which is being held at the West Boylston Housing Authority, 87 Maple Street at 6:01 p.m.

Goal #7 Work with the Housing Authority on Affordable Housing Improvements

The Board is meeting this evening with Housing Authority members Joan Welsh, Emily Witkus, Marcia Cairns, Ken Arena and Director Anita Sullivan. Mr. McCormick explained the reason the Board is here is because it was a goal of the Board that if there is something they can do to help the Housing Authority out, they want to make themselves available as the Housing Authority has a nice property.

Marcia Cairns thinks the idea is a great one. They did use the money they received from the CPA to redo some of the roofs on their buildings. Then they received a capital grant from the state and they put new windows in every building and anyone who had a refrigerator over ten years of age was given a new refrigerator. They are now working on their boilers and they have noticed a difference in their utility usage with the new windows. The facility is heated by gas.

Ms. Sullivan explained that the elderly pay 3% of their income for rent and families pay 27% and their own heat and electricity. Rents range from \$40 to \$900 a month. The elderly rent is often lowered because of medical insurance. With regard to family rents, some may be on unemployment, and the rent is based on their income, so the state will subsidize them if their income is less than their bills. The Housing Authority is responsible for utilities, maintenance and salaries. They do not have a lot left over. With the grants they are concentrating on structures and they have Capital Improvement Program which will cover item such as the boilers. They do not have funds to go and replace carpets, the grounds and landscaping is one of the things they do not have enough money for and the lawn is mostly crab grass. They have one maintenance man and he still works the same amount of hours he did when all the units were new and they are now 30 year old buildings. He is on call 24-7.

Ms. Sullivan asked if they ever had an emergency could the town plow their road. Mr. McCormick thinks that is something the town could do. Ms. Sullivan noted that the town does sand for them and they do a great job. Ms. Cairns suggested having the town come in to plow should there be a need for a fire truck or an ambulance during a winter snow storm. Mr. McCormick asked Ms. Sullivan if she would have a problem with that and she indicated that she would not and they always look for help because there is never enough help. Ms. Cairns noted that they often have the jail do their lawns, however, Ms. Sullivan pointed out that it does not happen regularly. Mr. Rucho suggested that if they would like assistance with future requests for assistance on projects using the Sheriff's office, they could contact the Town Administrator. Ms. Sullivan noted that they have used them in the past for painting, but not that often.

Ms. Cairns explained that when they turnover an apartment having somebody come in and help paint or clean would be helpful. Mr. Hadley asked about the number of buildings. Ms. Sullivan reports 8 buildings, one solo office, 36 elderly, 18 family, 5 two-bedroom and 13 three-bedroom. They also oversee the Foster Street facility. Mr. Hadley asked if there is a need for more elderly housing. Ms. Sullivan's waiting list is for affordable housing. Mr. Hadley asked if there is a need for more housing for West Boylston elderly on this land or somewhere else in town. Ms. Sullivan explained that she does have a waiting list and most pay \$200 to \$300 a month and that includes their utilities. She has 36

one bedroom units for elderly. They have to house emergency applicants first and those could come from across the state. All elderly are West Boylston residents and they have 25 on a waiting list, but people come on and off the waiting list. Ms. Cairns shared that as a Board they have talk about that as they fear that the state might take their land because the state's push is for family housing and they do not want any more family housing. They have 10 acres left, there are some wetlands, and they have access onto Route 140.

Mr. Rucho asked if all the roofs were replaced. Ms. Sullivan advised that all original buildings were and units 92 and 93 were not. They were built in 1983. It was prevailing wage and architect shingles. Mr. McCormick suggested it might be helpful to have more meetings such as the one this evening. Mr. Arena asked about having school students come in and volunteer. Mr. Rucho suggested the county trail court workers. Things to be done include painting, power washing, and landscaping. Mr. Hadley asked Bob Barrell, member of the Affordable Housing Trust and former Director of the Hudson Housing Authority, about money from the state. Mr. Barrell explained that the state passed a large bond bill for Housing Authority capital improvements. Ms. Cairns advised that the Capital Plan is posted in their building and it will pay for boiler and low flow toilets.

Mr. Hadley asked about structures of the building. Ms. Sullivan pointed out that some of the vinyl siding is fading and needs to be replaced. Mr. Hadley informed her that it can also be painted. Mr. Rucho suggested having it fixed when the roofs are done so the wood underneath does not rot. Ms. Sullivan feels that the buildings are in pretty good shape. They have a lot of deferred maintenance and now with the Capital Improvement Plan will be able to fund things as they are supposed to see a stream of money coming in every year. Tenant concerns are around the lawn, leaves, painting and carpets. Mr. Rucho added that the Sheriff said he would make West Boylston a priority. Ms. Lucier suggested Ms. Sullivan develop a list of items, which they would like assistance on and we could scheduled them on a calendar, which could be part of the discussion with the Sheriff. Ms. Sullivan understands that the jail only provides people and she is happy to provide materials. Ms. Lucier also suggested that she speak with the School Superintendent about students doing service projects, which is now a requirement. Ms. Sullivan will develop a list.

Mr. Barrell explained that the Bond Bill will fund capital items. For years they were done on a competitive basis and the Housing Authorities in this area didn't get any of the money. Now with the Plan, we will get money. Mr. Rucho suggested speaking with Senator Chandler or Rep. O'Day. Ms. Sullivan noted that they are always receptive.

Ms. Cairns heard a rumor that a builder was interested in the land in back of the Housing Authority. Mr. Barrell clarified that a builder mentioned he would like to meet with the Affordable Housing Task Force. He added that the Task Force would be interested in using the land if the Housing Authority would be interested in turning the land back to the town.

Ms. Sullivan expressed her gratitude to the town for the CPC funds for the roofs. Mr. Hadley asked if there were any empty units. Ms. Sullivan has three and this past 12 months she had 16 turnovers, 2 families and the rest elderly. She added that the waiting list constantly moves as people may have made other arrangements or may not be ready to move. Locals to go to the top of the list. They rarely have a first floor apartment available as often people on the second floor may have an issue such as a broken hip or leg and they request a first floor unit. They could use more housing on the first floor and an elevator.

Mr. Hadley asked if they go through an apartment once somebody moves out. Ms. Sullivan replied that it depends on what was there. They are trying to be a non-smoking facility and they are still addressing smoking. They try to get those units cleaned and it is a huge job. They are looking at a number of policies from across the state in the hopes of adopting a no smoking policy. Mr. Rucho

suggested starting with new tenants. It was noted that the City of Leominster was just sued for allowing smoking in a public building. Mr. Barrell pointed out that you are exposing employees to a smoke environment and it can create a health issue. Mr. McCormick thinks it is a good start. Mr. Rucho suggested another article in The Banner to let residents know of the numbers. Ms. Sullivan noted that they are all West Boylston who like being here because they have family close by and they look out for one another. Ms. Cairns stated that she got the idea to do the article in The Banner because at the FISP Committee somebody said the place is a dump. Ms. Sullivan added that the apartments are beautiful, cross vitalization, natural wood and so affordable. They would like sidewalks for the elderly and children the walk on. The Council on Aging van does come through often to bring people to a variety of places including Stop & Shop and for appointments. As far as parking goes, Mr. Hadley asked how much more do they need. Ms. Sullivan feels that parking for guests is fine and they have one space per apartment. Ms. Cairns would like additional parking.

With no further business to come before the Board, motion Mr. Rucho at 6:55 p.m. to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Kittredge, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: November 20, 2013

Nancy E. Lucier, Municipal Assistant

Kevin M. McCormick, Chairman

Christopher A. Rucho, Vice Chairman

John W. Hadley, Clerk

Michael J. Kittredge, Jr., Selectman