

# FY21 Shelburne Housing Authority Annual Report



SHA

Highland Village is a community of 46 units of elderly and disabled housing.

## FY21 Stats:

- 343 Work Orders Completed
- 6 New Residents Welcomed

## Board of Commissioners

Susan Flaccus, Chair

Rita Maccini, Vice Chair

Roger Bowen Weld

Kim Levitch

Margaret Payne

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Gina Govoni, Executive Director

## Governance

SHA's inability to maintain surplus budget and adequate operating reserves has been a concern for many years. Given the ongoing concern over financial viability, Commissioners began working with current HRA management to seek out administrative efficiencies. This pursuit led to the Commissioners to authorize HRA to pursue grant funds for this effort in February of 2020. The application was delayed due to the pandemic. In February 2021, DHCD provided a grant to enable HRA and SHA to pursue regionalization, or a merger. That grant enabled a planning committee to meet five times over the course of 2021 to discuss the operations, governance structure, and options for improving services and the efficiency of administration. The planning committee, facilitated by Viva Consulting, presented its work and recommendations at a September 28, 2021 joint board meeting. At that meeting, both boards voted unanimously to continue to pursue a traditional merger. Discussions with DHCD and our legislative delegation about next steps will begin in October 2021.

## COVID Pandemic

FY 2021 continued to be impacted in many ways by COVID-19. Throughout the year, DHCD's recommendations and guidelines for pandemic operations limited the spread of the virus, and enabled HRA to continue providing service. Additional cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces in common areas continued throughout the year. The community room was re-opened for resident use. Through a partnership with Franklin County Sheriff's Office and LifePath, on-site vaccine clinics were arranged at Highland Village. This occurred during a time that was very difficult for residents to access vaccines.

## Operations

This year Crystal Kindle joined the property management team. Crystal works with our Maintenance staff member, Mark Fortier, and conducts annual unit inspections.

Last year, on the SHA website, a “Report Maintenance Issues” button was implemented on the website to allow folks the ability to submit work orders online. Many residents are taking advantage of this online tool.

## **DHCD**

During the fiscal year, DHCD conducted the Property Management Review (PMR) remotely. This review captures information from all DHCD reporting methods, a review of work order systems, waivers for vacancies, collections, CHAMP (waitlists) and capital plans. There were no findings this year’s PMR.

We continue to have concern with the CHAMP (centralized MA waitlist), which is a required tool. Applicants that are not next on the waitlist and are not processed in the prioritized order, cannot be moved into DHCD’s tenant list. This resulted in SHA processing the same applicants that were non-responsive during applicant “pulls” with HRA. CHAMP has increased the time it takes for new applicants to get into units, and therefore the time that units sit vacant. It is also a time consuming and expensive process to manage.

## **Partnership with LifePath**

Shelburne Housing Authority continues a partnership with LifePath to provide on-site services including information and referral, assistance with accessing services and a meals program. Although the community room has opened for resident’s use, LifePath continues to deliver meals rather than having in person gatherings. Meal delivery has been very popular prior to COVID, sit down meals averaged 94 meals per month, in the past 6 months, home delivery meals averaged over 200 per month!

## **Capital Projects**

The design phase II of the kitchen project has been completed and the project is “shovel ready” should there be funds awarded to complete this large-scale project.

SHA was awarded health and safety funds in 2019 to use for tree removal for hazardous trees. The project had to be rebid. It was completed in FY2021.

After finding extensive rotting wood, the scope of the vestibule enclosure for building A project has grown. The entryway roof is rotted to the posts and the structure needs to be almost entirely replaced. Working with the Regional Capital Assistant Team (RCAT), HRA has re-allocated funding to meet the needs of the new project scope and anticipates completing this project in 2021.

A portion of the concrete walkways project funds may be re-allocated to cover the vestibule (building A entryway roof project). Originally, this project was to create paved paths from the

rear of Building B and C to the central walkways. Depending on the availability of funds, possible additional walkways may be created to tie patio exit doors to the existing concrete pathways. Related, but separate, the asphalt parking lot cracks have been repaired for the time being.

The project to repair trim, siding, and repoint masonry is being developed by an engineer hired by RCAT. He has formulated a draft plan which is being reviewed by HRA and will be put to bid by RCAT as soon as possible.

The exterior lighting upgrades have become part of the LEAN energy efficiency project. In September, Paradigm Energy reviewed entire site for energy efficiency improvements (lighting, hot water heating, insulation, and weatherization). In October, Paradigm should determine which upgrades it will propose to fund. RCAT had the building and pole lighting project in design phase, which has been tabled while the LEAN project is finalized.

In addition to the lighting upgrades, the LEAN program is considering installing mini splits in each living room. Individual condensers would be needed for each apartment. The project is still under review and now likely to start in 2022. The final placement of the condensers, as well as the cost of the stone pads, will be evaluated if the project is authorized to proceed by Eversource.