



P.O. Box 2901, Augusta, ME 04338-2901 * (207) 512-2180



March 2014
Newsletter

CAPITOL AREA HOUSING ASSOCIATION
“**LANDLORDS WORKING TOGETHER**”

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A Message from the CAHA Board

Dear Members,

It seems as if it was just yesterday that we converged upon the state house to get some unfavorable legislation against rental property owners rolled back and yet that was three years ago! We are in need to unite once again at Augusta City Hall on March 4th at 5:30 p.m. to weigh in on recent hints that the Augusta Housing Authority is strongly considering an undertaking to build and maintain its own city owned housing project(s). [See the newspaper article](#) which is also duplicated on page 3 of this newsletter.

The Capital Area Housing Association's position is that the funds that are available should be used for rehab purposes across the entire area that Augusta Housing services. These funds distributed in the form of low interest loans with favorable repayment terms would then act as a perpetual fund from which the current housing stock would be able to be improved.

Please join us on March 4 at 5:30 p.m. in the lobby of the Augusta City Hall to meet beforehand so that we can each wear a sticker that identifies us as rental property owners to show that we are aware and concerned about the decisions that are being made by our local government.

Sincerely,
The CAHA Board

**Augusta Housing Authority leader wants
to help renters**

See page 3 for full article

No March CAHA Member Meeting



THE CITY OF AUGUSTA AND AUGUSTA HOUSING AUTHORITY

PRESENT

COMMUNITY HOUSING FORUM

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2014

5:30-8:30PM

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS, AUGUSTA CITY CENTER

Come listen to people in the know about the desires and needs of Augusta's homebuyers, renters, homeless, landlords, and seniors; and of the condition and affordability of the city's housing.

Tell your own stories, offer your own opinions about what Augusta ought to do to improve housing opportunities.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER, MARGARET BEAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,

MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

PRESENTERS WILL INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES FROM BREAD OF LIFE MINISTRIES, SPRAGUE AND CURTIS REAL ESTATE, CITY OF AUGUSTA, CAPITAL AREA HOUSING ASSOCIATION, AND AUGUSTA HOUSING AUTHORITY

REFRESHMENTS AND NETWORKING 5:30-6:00

PRESENTATIONS BEGIN AT 6PM

FRANK O'HARA, PLANNING DECISIONS-FACILITATOR

Augusta Housing Authority leader wants to help renters

Amanda Bartlett, who took the job in December, wants the local housing authority to expand its role by potentially getting into developing, rehabilitating, building and owning housing units.

By Keith Edwards kedwards@centralmaine.com
Staff Writer

AUGUSTA — The new leader of the Augusta Housing Authority wants the organization to take a more aggressive role in addressing what she describes as the near-crisis level lack of affordable, safe housing in the city.

Over the last year, 65 housing units were lost in Augusta, some to fires, but most were shut down by the city for safety code violations found in some of the aging rental housing stock.

That has tightened up the availability of rental housing in Augusta.

“We’re at a near-crisis situation in this community right now,” said Amanda Bartlett, executive director of the Augusta Housing Authority. “With me coming on board, it seems like a good time to look at expanding our role, so we’re not just doing vouchers. This is an opportunity for us to address a need in the community. I think the time is right to do something.”

Bartlett, who took the job in December, wants the local housing authority, which currently primarily focuses on administering the Section 8 voucher program in the area, to expand its role by potentially getting into developing, rehabilitating, building and owning housing units.

The Augusta Housing Authority is a quasi-governmental agency that administers the federal Section 8 voucher program, which provides most of its funding. Members of its board are appointed by the mayor and city councilors, and its staff are technically city employees. But their actions are independent of the city, as required by state law, according to City Manager William Bridgeo.

According to MaineHousing statistics, the average monthly rent for a two bedroom apartment in Augusta, with utilities included, is \$744. It would take an annual income of \$29,763 to afford that rent, according to MaineHousing, a statewide housing finance agency.

But the median household income in Augusta is only \$23,878 which, according to MaineHousing, would only make that household able to afford rent of \$595 a month.

Nearly 60 percent of Augusta renter households are thus unable to afford the average two-bedroom apartment rent of \$744.



YOUNG PRO: Amanda Bartlett, the new director of the Augusta Housing Authority and winner of the Chamber of Commerce’s Young Professional Award, at her Augusta office.

Staff file photo by Andy Molloy

HOUSING FORUM IN AUGUSTA

AUGUSTA — A public forum to discuss housing in Augusta, put on jointly by the city and Augusta Housing Authority, will focus on housing needs in Augusta and how the housing authority could play a larger role helping to provide housing to low income residents.

**Tuesday, March 4
5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Augusta City Center**

Augusta Housing Authority leader wants to help renters
Continued from page 3

There is a waiting list of 675 people seeking Section 8 housing vouchers from the Augusta Housing Authority. But as hundreds of people waited for a voucher, last year 11 families gave up their vouchers because they couldn't find a rental unit in Augusta, according to Bartlett. Some families who held the much-coveted federal Section 8 rental assistance vouchers for housing in Augusta gave them up because they couldn't find any apartments that met federal requirements, most of which set minimum safety standards, Bartlett said.

Bartlett said when a resident receiving Section 8 housing assistance loses their housing and needs to find a new unit, it takes them an average of three and a half months to find a new unit in Augusta.

So Bartlett wants to engage the community of Augusta to try to find ways the housing authority can help do something about the housing situation.

City officials are on board with her ambitious plans, and the housing authority and city will jointly host a housing forum to discuss how the authority might play a larger role in solving housing issues.

"The City Council is very eager to have a stronger working relationship between the city and housing authority," Bridgeo said. "And we're quite enthused about Amanda's ideas to broaden the authority's role. Clearly there is a lot of need in Augusta for improved housing stock. We need more safe, clean, affordable housing."

Bartlett and city officials hope many will attend the forum and provide input, including tenants, landlords, charitable organizations, residents, real estate agents, government officials and any others with an interest. The forum is from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. March 4 in council chambers at Augusta City Center.

"Everybody should be part of this conversation," Bartlett said. "There is a lot of work to be done. To be successful, it needs to be a partnership."

Bridgeo said there are grant programs and other funding sources that could be tapped to help improve and add housing. Some, he said, are only available to housing authorities while others are only available to municipalities.

"I think there is some question, over the last few years, that we might have missed out on some opportunities along those lines," Bridgeo said of the potential for grant funding for the authority. "That points out the need to work hand-in-glove with each other."

AUGUSTA HOUSING DATA

- Average monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment with utilities: \$744.
- Percentage of renter households unable to afford average two-bedroom rent: 60 percent.
- Income needed to afford average two-bedroom rent: \$29,763 annually, or \$14.31, hourly.
- Renter household median income: \$23,878.
- Rent affordable to a renter with the median income of \$23,878: \$597.
- Number of people on Augusta Housing Authority's waiting list for federally-funded Section 8 housing assistance vouchers: 675.
- Number of households receiving Section 8 vouchers from Augusta Housing Authority in 2013: 580.
- Total subsidy paid by Augusta Housing Authority in 2013: \$2.6 million.
- Jurisdiction of Augusta Housing Authority: Augusta and all towns within 10 miles.
- About 85 percent of Augusta Housing Authority clients live in the city of Augusta.

Source: MaineHousing, 2012 Housing Facts for Augusta Micropolitan Housing Market and Augusta Housing Authority.

Augusta Housing Authority leader wants to help renters

Continued from page 4

Bartlett said income-based housing or historic preservation tax credits could also be used to help provide funding for housing projects. Those were used by Housing Initiatives of New England's Cynthia Taylor at the Inn at City Hall and for her planned project to convert the former Cony flatiron building into senior citizen housing.

Raegan LaRochelle, vice-chairwoman of the volunteer Augusta Housing Authority board of directors, said the federally funded Community Development Block Grant and other grant funds could help address the lack of quality affordable housing in the Augusta area.

"I think the board is really enthusiastic about expanding their reach and becoming more visible in the community," said LaRochelle, who was just appointed to the board in January. "To the extent we're able to facilitate people being able to find stable, quality housing, everyone is on board with that. There's no downside. There are a lot of ideas milling around, and we're going to have to prioritize and figure out what our resources are and what we can reasonably accomplish."

Margaret Ayotte, chairwoman of the authority's board, could not be reached for comment Friday.

Bartlett said the authority already has an arm created specifically for real estate development, the Augusta Housing Service Corporation, but that entity has never really been active.

She said the nonprofit corporation has about \$307,000 in funds set aside for real estate development.

Bartlett previously worked for the Maine State Housing Authority and MaineHousing and ran her own business, Bartlett Inspection Services.

In 2011, after a newspaper investigation exposed unsafe conditions in Norway-area apartments and poor oversight of the program that provided Section 8 vouchers there, she helped relocate tenants and wrote a corrective action plan.

She said seeing some of the horrifying living situations there and learning that many people in the community were aware of safety code issues in the apartments, but didn't know what to do about them, showed her a community-wide approach is needed to address housing challenges.

Many other housing authorities, across the country and in Maine, already develop, build, rehabilitate and own housing.

In Bangor, for example, Bangor Housing Development Corp., the development wing of Bangor Housing Authority, plans to add 34 apartments in new and rehabilitated buildings this year.

Bartlett said the time is ripe, if not well overdue, for Augusta Housing Authority to play a larger role in increasing the availability of safe, affordable housing in Augusta.

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For information about radon testing visit state of Maine website at
<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/rad/radon/hp-radon.htm>

LANDLORDS REPORT TO DHHS FOR AIR RADON TESTING IN RENTAL PROPERTY

NAME OF LANDLORD CONDUCTING THE TEST: _____ PHONE: _____

RENTAL PROPERTY (or COMPLEX) NAME: _____

RENTAL PROPERTY (or COMPLEX) ADDRESS: _____
(STREET ADDRESS USING POST OFFICE ABBREVIATIONS)

(Address information MUST use standard Post Office abbreviations) _____
(TOWN AND ZIP CODE OF STREET ADDRESS)

Analysis Lab Maine Registration ID: _____

THE RADON TEST WAS CONDUCTED _____ / _____ TYPE OF TESTS (CIRCLE ONE) : Short term Long term
(MONTH) (YEAR)

Building Name/Number	Apartment/Unit Name/Number	TEST KIT ID # <small>ONLY ONE TEST KIT NUMBER AND RESULT PER LINE</small>	RESULT (pCi/L)	FLOOR* (B, 1, 2, 3, etc)	MIT SYS*** INSTALLED Y or N	Mobile Home Y or N

Test kit ID# means the I.D. number placed on the test device by the lab.

***Floor abbreviations:** B=BASEMENT, 1=1st FLOOR, 2= 2nd FLOOR, 3= 3rd FLOOR, etc. U=UNKNOWN

*****MIT SYS=** IS THERE A MITIGATION SYSTEM INSTALLED TO CONTROL RADON IN THE STRUCTURE?

Page _____ of _____

MAIL TO: **RADON REGISTRATION REPORTS**
MAINE RADIATION CONTROL PROGRAM
11 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0011

OR EMAIL TO: RADON.DHHS@MAINE.GOV

OR FAX TO (ONLY IF 6 PAGES OR LESS): **207-287-3059**
(AUTHORIZED FOR LOCAL REPRODUCTION)



Landlords Disclosure Of Radon Gas Hazards In A Residential Rental Property

There are possible serious health risks due to exposure to radon. Please read the attached information.

Information About Your Building

Residential Rental Unit Number Or Other Identifier: _____

Street Address (including Rental complex name if applicable): _____

A radon test in the unit identified above or in other parts of your building was completed on ____/____/____.
(day)/(month)/(year)

A Tenant may request a re-test after 10 years from the date above, unless the landlord has installed and maintains a functioning radon mitigation system.

The radon level found in the above identified unit (or, if the unit was not tested, the highest level found during testing in other parts of the building) was _____ pCi/l. A copy of the original results report is available for viewing by the Tenant. Radon mitigation is recommended, but not required, for radon levels of 4 pCi/l or higher. However, if radon levels of 4.0 pCi/l or higher are not mitigated, the landlord or Tenant have the option to end the lease after providing at least 30 days notice.

The radon was tested by (check one): A Maine Registered Radon Tester ___/the landlord ___/a Tenant ___
If tested by a Maine-registered radon tester, their Maine Radon ID number is _____

Under Maine law, any radon testing in residential rental buildings must be conducted according to proper protocols and in accordance with rules adopted by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Additionally, Maine law gives the Tenant the right to conduct radon tests in their dwelling unit. They may hire a registered radon tester or conduct the test themselves.

A page explaining the hazards of radon, *Radon in Rental Housing-A Serious Hidden Danger to Family Health*, is attached.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RADON GAS HAZARDS DISCLOSURE

The signatures below acknowledge that the landlord or their agent has disclosed to the lessee, information about radon gas as required by 14 M.R.S.A. Section 6030-D. This acknowledgement does not constitute a waiver of any rights.

Landlord or Agent (printed) Date

Landlord or Agent (signed) Date

Tenant (printed) Date
Date

Tenant (signed)

Tenant (printed) Date

Tenant (signed) Date

**Minutes of Board Meeting
Capital Area Housing Association (CAHA)
Held at Lucky Gardens Restaurant, Hallowell
January 14, 2014**

President Ratna Don opened the meeting at 5:47 p.m. with the following present:

Secretary & Board Member Barbara A. Eckhardt
Treasurer Emmy Swanton
Board Member Charles Anderson
Board Member Ramona Venskus
Board Member Royce Watson
Board Member Harrison Wolfington

Business: Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Ramona, to accept the December 31, 2013 Treasurer's report along with the Profit & Loss Detail report from January thru December 2013. Motion passed unanimously.

A lengthy discussion followed concerning the best possible means to invest CAHA's accounts. The CMAC bond of \$10,000 was cashed in; plus, the KV Credit Union CD will be coming due on January 28, 2014.

Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Royce, to hold all monies coming due to CAHA in the bank until a decision on where to invest them is discussed at the next Board meeting on February 11, 2014. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Ramona, to accept the November 19, 2013 Board minutes with the following amended agenda item **General Assistance Housing Ordinance in the City of Augusta**, section d. [For CAHA to purchase a PDF of the 2012 Life Safety Code Handbook and a PDF of the 2012 Cross Out of code changes.] to read: CAHA prefers not to purchase the Life Safety Code Handbook or the PDF of the 2012 Cross Out of code changes, as they are available at the State and Law libraries. Motion passed unanimously.

Audit of CAHA Books: It was the consensus of the Board to have Ratna and Charlie to audit the CAHA books.

CAHA Annual Banquet: Ramona sent the Board off to contact various vendors for their contribution to the give-away gifts at the banquet.

Speaker for the Banquet: After a lengthy discussion concerning whom to invite to speak at the banquet, the consensus was to tentatively invite Dan Bernier, Esq., legislative lobbyist.

Board Members and Officers for the Next Year: Board members Ratna, Barbara, and Royce terms will expire in February 2014 and are up for re-election,

Quick Books: Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Ramona, for CAHA to buy two copies of Quick Books—one for the outgoing treasurer Emmy for her valued work and one for the incoming treasurer. Motion passed unanimously.

Sherwin Williams's Flyer: Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Ramona, to accept the content of the Sherman Williams's flyer and charge Sherman Williams's a fee of \$100, plus postage, for Charlie to mail them to the members. Motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Committee—Radon Testing: There is no updated information regarding radon testing since last meeting in November.

Year-End Membership Renewal Update: Over half the members have renewed their membership, to date.

Mass Mailing Update: Ratna reported that 890 post cards were mailed, and 39 post cards were returned non-deliverable. The cost for this mass mailing was \$536.16. Due to the result of this mailing, CAHA was able to recruit ONLY six new members. CAHA collected \$240 in membership fees.

February Newsletter: Ratna will write his last president message for the newsletter. Eric Dick, Esq., will contribute his piece of 'Ask the Lawyer.'

Followup Administrative Staff Person, Lisa Montagna: Motion was made by Charlie, and seconded by Ramona, to accept Lisa Montagna's flat fee price quote of \$70/month to update the heating oil prices in the CAHA website and \$50 each for creating and distributing a CAHA Newsletter. Motion passed unanimously.

New Business: To seek a new CAHA President.

The Board had taken a 25-minute dinner break.

Motion was made by Ramona, and seconded by Harrison, to adjourn at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara A. Eckhardt, Secretary

Learn about New Incentives and New Ways to Save

Multifamily Efficiency Program

Efficiency Maine’s Multifamily Efficiency Program offers building owners incentives to install energy efficiency measures in Maine’s small to medium multifamily buildings.

Program Eligibility

- All multifamily buildings with 5 or more apartment units per building may participate.
- Buildings with 1 – 4 units are eligible for incentives through Efficiency Maine’s Home Energy Savings Program.
- The Multifamily Efficiency Program is available to all income levels including affordable housing units and market rate units.
- The program is not restricted by fuel type. Buildings using various fuel types – including but not limited to electricity, natural gas, oil and propane – may participate.
- Multifamily Program incentives cannot be combined with incentives from other Efficiency Maine programs.

Two Paths to Efficiency

The Multifamily Efficiency Program offers two options for participation:

- **Prescriptive Path** provides financial incentives associated with the installation of energy savings upgrades. Incentives are measure-based not to exceed \$1,000 per apartment unit per program year.
- **Custom Path** begins with an energy assessment of your entire multifamily building. Your Program Partner uses this assessment to develop a customized Energy Reduction Plan to achieve 20% or greater whole-building savings with incentives of up to \$1,800 per unit.

Prescriptive Path

To participate in the Prescriptive Path you can choose which energy efficiency upgrades to install from a list of eligible measures including:

Air Sealing	Programmable Thermostats
Insulation	Smart Pumps with ECM Motors
High Efficiency Boilers	High Efficiency Water Heating
Boiler Controls	Low Flow Devices
Ductless Heat Pumps	Lighting



Custom Path

To participate in the Custom Path you will work with your Program Partner to conduct a whole-building assessment of your building's energy consumption. Your Partner will then develop an Energy Reduction Plan with proposed improvements to achieve a minimum of 20% energy energy savings. Incentives of up to \$1,800 per apartment unit are offered, not to exceed 50% of the proposed project cost.



Benchmarking Services

The Multifamily Efficiency Program offers benchmarking services for 5+ unit multifamily buildings at no cost. This informative service is the first step in improving the energy performance of your multifamily building.

Program Partners

Multifamily Efficiency Program Partners are a key resource to participants, serving as advocates, experts and guides through every step of the program – from application to project completion.

Building owners are required to work with a Program Partner to participate in both the Custom and Prescriptive Paths of the Multifamily Efficiency Program. Your Partner can help you determine which path makes the most sense for your building design.

Learn More

For more details, visit the Multifamily Efficiency Program section of the Efficiency Maine Web site at: <http://www.energymaine.com/at-work/multifamily-efficiency-program>.



We deliver quality home heating oil, kerosene and propane to homes and businesses throughout the communities of Central Maine. We are happy to assist you in ordering fuel, setting up credit or with any questions you may have. Call us at (207) 626-2714.



Fielding's Oil & Propane is proud to serve the members of CAHA with all of their heating needs and looks forward to having a long relationship with the organization. Call us and you will see how dedicated we really are. (207) 623-3322

<p>Newcomer Relocation Services "Upscale Rentals" Phone/Fax: 622-4312 Cell: 446-4312 <i>ramona@NewcomerRelocation.com</i> www.NewcomerRelocation.com No application fee for CAHA members</p>	<p>Liberty Mutual (207) 622-0518 Darryl Arnold (x-52909) New Auto and Home Insurance Benefit CAHA member benefits include savings on auto and home insurance! Purchase high-quality auto, home, condo, and renters insurance at low group rates.</p>	<p>Gosline's Hardware (207) 582-1900 563 Maine Ave. Farmingdale, ME Paint, paint supplies, plumbing, heating, electrical, lawn & garden, hand & power tools.</p>	<p>Northeast Bank (207) 623-0303 Cell: (207) 446-0990 Mortgage loans for residential and investment properties <i>ssachs@northeastbank.com</i> \$250.00 discount on already low closing costs.</p>
<p>Sherwin Williams <i>Paint + Paint Supplies</i> (207) 622-6818 <i>sw5736@sherwin.com</i> <i>All painting accessories</i> <i>15% off list price everyday!</i> <i>20% off many case lots!</i></p>	<p>Your Ad Can Go Here</p>	<p>Eric S. Dick, Esq. Farris, Foley & Dick, P.A. (207) 622-5872 <i>ffdlaw@gwi.net</i> Discount off regular hourly rate to CAHA member on landlord/tenant matters</p>	<p>Your Ad Can Go Here</p>

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