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Housing Authority aims for revitalization

Officials: Funds needed to strengthen department

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FITCHBURG — More than \$650,000 in funding could help strengthen the Fitchburg Housing Authority, said Executive Director Doug Bushman.

The Pathway for Success Plan would fund about \$440,000 for one-time expenses like workforce development office would help residents find jobs and connect them to services from non-

profit organizations and the state, he said.

Funding would also go toward upkeep for the housing authority's properties, Bushman said. He is requesting money for the plan through the state's Department of Housing and Community Development.

The city's housing authority is newly independent after 5 years of management under the Leominster Housing Authority.

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Fitchburg Housing Authority Executive Director Doug Bushman is hoping for \$650,000 for various projects in the city.

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FILE PHOTO

Housing Authority hopes for a revival

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A 2012 state audit found that the Fitchburg authority had long waiting lists for housing, slow unit turnover, high vacancy rates, and neglected properties.

Since then, the authority and its Board of Directors have been working to address those issues.

Bushman knew coming into the position that the Fitchburg authority has its challenges.

Previous management was archaic and siloed, he said, but Bushman wants to have an open system that empowers staff. So far, staff members have been responding well, he said.

Bushman looking forward to turning it around like he did in Marlboro, where he served as the city's housing chief for 7 years.

"I feel like my whole career has led up to this point," he said. "The plan will get us to the point where we're not just treading water, but we're succeeding."

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