



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

**SENATOR WILLIAM N. BROWNSBERGER**  
*Second Suffolk and Middlesex District*

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 504  
BOSTON, MA 02133-1053  
TEL. (617) 722-1280  
FAX (617) 722-1069

WILLIAM.BROWNSBERGER@MASENATE.GOV  
WWW.MASENATE.GOV

*Chairman*  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
THE JUDICIARY

*Vice Chairman*  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
ETHICS

---

ELECTION LAWS  
MUNICIPALITIES AND  
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
WAYS AND MEANS

July 31, 2015

Sami S. Baghdady, Chair  
Board of Selectmen  
455 Concord Avenue  
Belmont, MA 02478

Dear Chairman Baghdady,

Thank you for your letter dated June 3, 2015.

I apologize for the slow response – I asked my staff to assemble some history on the issue.

Please don't take my recent letter to Town Meeting regarding limited state funding as anything but a statement of sad fact. As to desire and intention, please know that I share your concerns and have consistently supported increased state funding for public housing. In fact, FY16 will be a high-water mark of state support; Belmont Housing Authority will receive \$769,750 in capital funds and operating subsidy.

The commonwealth provides funding for local housing authorities from two primary sources; capital funds allocated from the capital budget and operating subsidies from a line item in the state budget.

As a new representative in 2007, I worked with the Belmont Housing Authority to obtain capital funds from DHCD for several projects in Belmont; \$200,000 for the fire alarm system at Sherman Gardens; \$75,000 for the exterior steps at Sherman Gardens; and, \$25,000 to study insulation needs at Belmont Village. These projects represented BHA's greatest needs at the time.

In its FY08-FY12 capital investment plan, the Patrick administration estimated that the state would need to spend \$75-\$145 million per year to address the backlog of capital repairs to our state's public housing units. That cost is over and above \$75 million needed just to maintain *status quo* conditions. I and other legislators worked to pass the FY08 housing bond bill. As a result, capital spending for public housing increased 33% over the prior year. Unfortunately, since then, capital spending for local housing authorities on a year over year basis has, for the most part, decreased or remained flat despite our best efforts, while operating costs and maintenance backlogs have undoubtedly continued to grow.




Formula Funding, which began in 2012, has resulted in a more predictable and fair allocation of capital funding to local housing authorities. The formula allocates funding based on the value of a local housing authority's capital needs divided by the value of all capital needs at local housing authorities across the state multiplied by the total amount of capital funds available. This formula ensures that every housing authority receives a proportional share according to its need. While local housing authorities can no longer obtain lump sum funding to complete large projects, the formula allows housing authorities to plan for long term needs with an assumption of a predictable and regular allocation.

The operating subsidy account helps make up the difference between operating costs and revenues. Over the last several years, Belmont's operating subsidy has increased significantly, resulting in net gains of state support for BHA. [table below] The state's housing authority subsidy budget account, 7004-9005, includes language to allow excess funds from the subsidy account to be expended for capital repairs, in the event that an authority does not use its entire subsidy on operating expenses.

Supporting local housing authorities will continue to be a priority for me. A higher capital budget allocation will result in more capital funds for Belmont. I will advocate for more capital funding, and for more operating funding, whenever I can find the opportunity.

Respectfully,



William N. Brownsberger  
STATE SENATOR

Belmont Housing Authority State Funds Receipts:

Formula Funding	Operating Subsidy	
FY2008		\$68,483
FY2009	—	\$250,747
FY2010	—	\$278,281
FY2011	—	\$207,321
FY2012	\$127,599	\$224,389
FY2013	\$238,977	\$240,464
FY2014	\$232,489	\$348,336
FY2015	\$279,857	\$378,829
FY 2016	\$276,824	\$492,926*

\*subject to final allocation