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Home rehabilitation administered by the CHRIC

By David Prenatt

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SHERMAN - Village of Sherman Trustees received a presentation from CHRIC (Chautauqua Home Rehabilitation and Improvement Corporation) Director of Housing Services Eileen Powers when they convened for their board meeting on August 4.

The purpose of the presentation was to provide clarification of the role CHRIC will play in the administration of a program to rehabilitate 8 or 9 eligible households in the Village.

The Village of Sherman received notification on June 15 by New York State Homes and Community Renewal that it was awarded a Community Development Block Grant of \$488,250 for housing rehabilitation, said Mayor Colleen Meeder. "We are very grateful to assist residents in a way that will directly impact their most critical needs, such as replacing leaky roofs, bad foundations, furnaces, windows, and the like," she said.

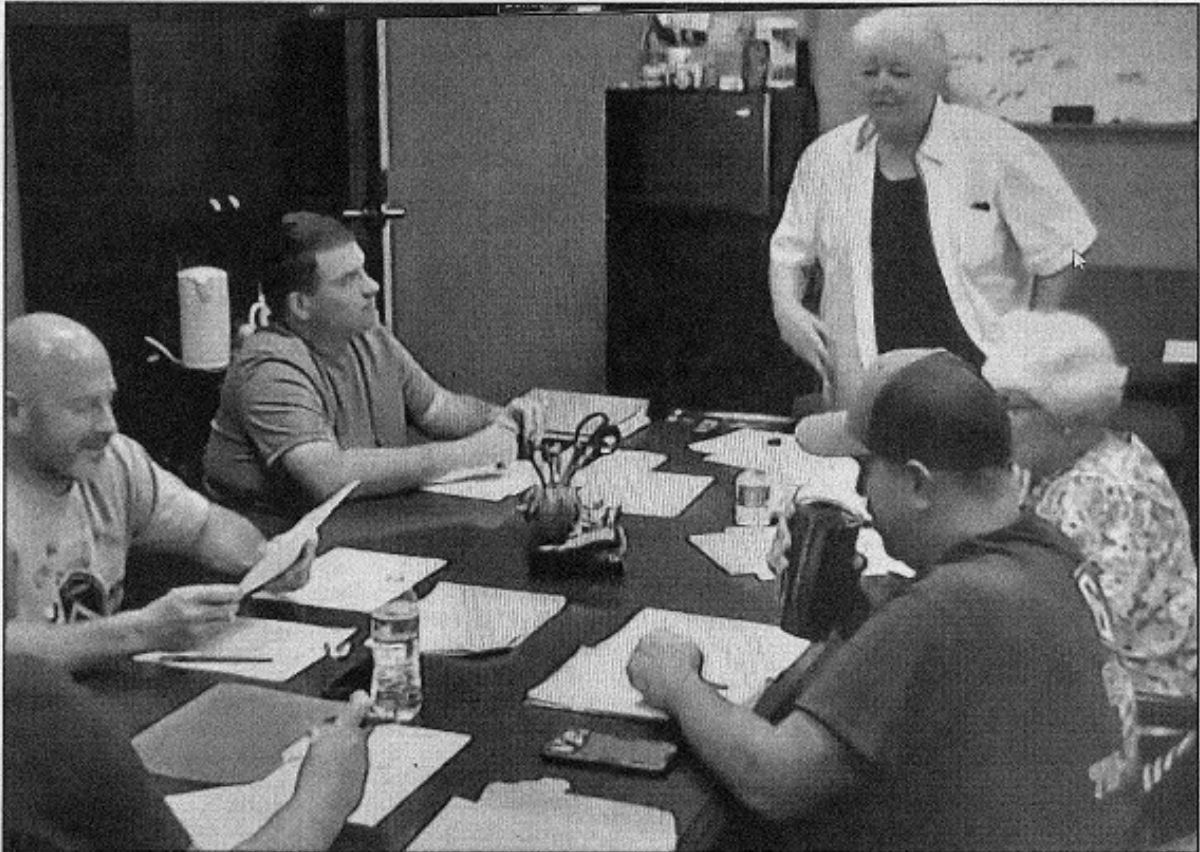
The program will largely

be administered by CHRIC, who will reach out to those who initially applied, Meeder said. They will select 8 or 9 households to receive funding, following scored criteria that includes rehabilitation needs, income eligibility, as well as ADA and VA status.

Powers explained that eligibility is based on a household's gross income, as well as household size, which includes everyone living in the home, whether they contribute to income or not. For example, Powers said, if someone's 26-year-old comes home to roost, they are considered part of the household.

Powers said she has 22 people from Sherman who have applied for home rehabilitation and she will be mailing forms to everyone on the list. She noted that some people find the forms daunting, so four weeks after they are mailed, she does follow-ups with those who have not returned the paperwork. "I try to help them as much as I can," she said.

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Eileen Powers, director of CHRIC, reviews the procedure for receiving funds to rehabilitate housing

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Requirements from applicants include proof of income, proof of home ownership, evidence that mortgage payments are up to date if there is a mortgage, and tax returns for the past two years. Insurance is preferred, but not required, she added.

Regarding the tax returns, Powers noted that it is the Office of Community Renewal which requires them. "I don't know why OCR is so adamant about receiving two years tax returns," she said. "The decision is based on the most recent six to eight weeks of income, unless we suspect the most recent income is an anomaly."

Powers told trustees how the scored criteria work to determine eligibility. "I use a sliding scale point system," she said. "One point is given for anyone over 60, anyone who is a veteran or any person who is disabled." She said that points are also awarded based on rehabilitation needs, as well as for meeting income eligibility. Powers noted that the highest possible score is 28.

Powers told trustees that CHRIC has a list of pre-approved contractors, and each one is required to have workers' compensation and liability insurance. She

also said that if a job costs over \$25,000, the contractor must be certified. "If a contractor is not going to work out well, we know it pretty quickly," she said. "We are desperate for more contractors all the time."

Powers told trustees that "This is not based on first come, first served." After completing follow-ups with applicants, she begins giving out materials to the rehabilitation staff. Once the required forms are received, the staff begins doing inspections of the dwellings, she said. "No one is chosen until all paperwork is completed," she added.

Meeder reminded trustees that CHRIC pays the contractors up front. "We then do a submittal to the State for reimbursement," she said. Powers noted that "once the funds are released, there will be 10 or 12 draws on the grant."

Meeder said she would be asking board members to approve an official agreement between the Village and CHRIC to administer all of the work. The agreement with CHRIC is for three years, Powers said.

Board of trustees officially approved the agreement at their regular meeting on August 4.