

In closed session tonight, Watauga County Commissioners plan to discuss whether or not to assist Elk Motel owner Floyd Garrison finance a connection to Boone's sewer system.

If Commissioners raise a third, according to Garrison, Boone has agreed to contribute another third. As for the rest? He's about halfway there in his fundraising efforts. Garrison fears if Commissioners reject his request, the Motel will close. It's more than a motel, Garrison says.

For \$300-\$325 a month including utilities, low income people have a place to live, he says.

Why not apply for non-profit status? It's more complicated than that, Garrison says.

Non-profits like Hospitality House have a series of rules and regulations- and the only thing Garrison asks from his tenants is that they get a job. Non-profit status may be an option in the future, he says, but not right now.

Last meeting, Commissioners questioned the legality of financing the sewer line. They will be discussing that aspect of the issue in closed session, and could take action on the matter afterwards. Garrison says if the Elk Motel were to close, both county and town governments would be affected.

"If these people don't have a home, a roof over their heads, then it's going to cost the town in other ways, so it's not a matter of how they put out money to keep this thing going or not, they're going to keep it going one way or the other," he said.

The meeting will start at 6 p.m. in the Commissioners' Board Room.