

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Richard Meyers, City Manager

SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS DISCUSSION

DATE: April 20, 2022

### Background

The City Council has been discussing the issues surrounding homelessness since the December City Council meeting. Community members came out and participated in the Town Hall on April 5<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the proposal that was made to the City Council. The input from the citizens that participated supported the proposal and provided some insights into options.

The ongoing efforts to provide some level of services and managed sheltering at the Community Center and City Hall by existing City staff is not sustainable and alternative sheltering and management must be pursued. The level of sheltering and management has produced some success by reducing unmanaged camping on public spaces through the community. Additionally, staff has helped three individuals get jobs and two are still sheltered at the sites; three individuals have been reconnected to family for support; two have been relocated to other mental health services; three have been removed from the sites either by arrest or trespass. The capacity at the sites has been limited to 12 tents which has resulted in about 15 people sheltered. As the homelessness crisis continues to grow and the awareness by individuals regarding the law increase, we have seen additional temporary camping occurring in public spaces within the community.

The Community Center site needs to be closed to make room for the roof project. Due to the inability to get materials the contractor has moved the project start date to early June.

With the later start date we can postpone movement of the individuals from the Community Center and City Hall while the new site is prepared. However, the schedule will be very tight. The new Pallet Shelters are scheduled for delivery April 21<sup>st</sup>. Lane County has purchased all 33 Pallet Shelters and transferred the ownership of the shelters to the City. We have estimated that basic preparations of the site and placement of all 33 Pallet Shelters will take approximately 4 weeks. The final completion of restroom and shower improvements to the house will be an additional 4 to 8 weeks (depending on contractor availability and materials). With the basic preparations made, placement of port-a-potties and periodically bringing the shower trailer to the site would meet the needs of the site until the final improvements are complete. Also during the site preparation period the RFP/RFQ could be issued and responses considered by the Council. Once the plan of action is approved we can actively pursue grant and other funding sources to assist with the project.

If the proposed plan is approved, the temporary shelter sites at the City Hall and Community Center will be closed in early June when basic preparations are complete and the management and services contractor is onboard. The individuals at the sites will be moved to the new location. The new location will then be opened to provide shelter to other adults from the community that are experiencing homelessness.

The first package of ordinance changes is scheduled to be brought to the Council for consideration at the next City Council meeting.

#### Recommendation

That the City Council, by motion, approve a plan to help address homelessness in Cottage Grove by: authorizing the development of the City's property at 2205 Hwy 99 as a low barrier shelter location to assist in addressing homelessness in the community which will include the reimbursement for the property to the Street SDC fund; soliciting proposals for the management and operation of the low barrier shelter; supporting the continued temporary location of the 8 campsites at the Community Center and the 5 camp sites at City Hall until the completion of basic improvement at the low barrier site in early June; and working with Homes For Good to pursue the development of low income housing at the City's property at 443 North Douglas.

#### Cost

Cost to reimburse the Street SDC \$211,000; preparation of low barrier shelter site is estimated at \$60,000; 24/7 management and program services costs are estimated at \$200,000/yr. The property cost for the low income housing site was \$275,000.



Richard Meyers, City Manager