



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0595, Version: 2

Resolution to Support Washtenaw County and Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Appropriate \$250,000 for Current and Future COVID-19 Shelter Response **(8 Votes Required)**

Responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have required swift action to ensure public health and safety. The Governor's Stay Home Stay Safe Executive Order, coupled with the Washtenaw County Health Departments requirements for social distancing were put in place to ensure safe physical distancing and limitations on contact to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus.

While most Ann Arbor residents are able to comply with the order, and the physical distancing requirements, those individuals and families experiencing homelessness lack the very basic element to comply with the Governor's order - a home.

The Shelter Association of Washtenaw County has worked in tandem with the Washtenaw County Health Department and the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development to adjust quickly to create safe shelter for those individuals who use the Delonis Center, the Warming Center and rotating winter shelters.

Over the course of the last month, that has included lowering the capacity of the Delonis Shelter to 38, based on a review by the WCHD that evaluated the space for shelter clients using the facility during the day and overnight. It has also resulted in the expansion of off-site locations including three churches and one Ann Arbor hotel. The church sites were also evaluated so they can accommodate the physical distancing requirement. The hotel provides individual rooms to clients who then have safe, individual space, and are prioritized for those who are more medically fragile or at-risk for COVID-19.

The expansion of locations, just as winter warming season was ending, required a number of changes for SAWC, including additional support from Washtenaw County. All sites require 24/7 staffing, case management, supplies, laundry, food, and other items to support ongoing shelter efforts. Based on costs incurred in March and April, and potential increase in homelessness as eviction moratoriums are lifted, SAWC's best estimate for staff costs would exceed \$600,000 by the end of June, and the County's contributions are estimated at about \$300,000-600,000 a month depending on the number of individual units (hotel or dorm) and meals provided.

Washtenaw County and SAWC are currently working on an MOU to clarify roles and financial contributions to increased sheltering costs. SAWC is currently covering the costs of 24/7 staffing at all sites including operational and case management staff, individual laundry, transportation of residents between sites, cleaning supplies, PPE and other supplies and incidentals. Washtenaw County has the contract and is paying for the hotel units as well as 3 meals a day per person at all off-site locations.

To ensure the ability to provide shelter, case management and additional services, a request is being

made to the City of Ann Arbor to provide financial support of up to \$250,000 to Washtenaw County and SAWC in two key ways:

- \$125,000 contribution to cover costs incurred in March and April due to the rapid expansion of shelter locations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will be pro-rated between the two entities based on costs incurred (assuming FEMA reimbursement, when eligible)
- \$125,000 for future costs beginning May 1, 2020 that support COVID-19 response including use of the City's funding as required 25% local match for FEMA reimbursable expenses for County support and SAWC's operations. The funding will be pro-rated between the two entities based on costs incurred. If funds are not utilized, they will be returned to the City.

As the public health emergency continues, SAWC, along with the County, are working to test all Shelter clients for COVID-19. This could result in the shifting in shelter settings - including changes within congregate and/or addition of individual room settings such as hotels or dorms. The County and SAWC have been and remain committed to serving this population, but cannot predict the need or related costs, so additional support will help ensure safety for Shelter clients moving forward.

To date the Shelter has received \$20,000 from United Way of Washtenaw County, \$7,500 from Key Bank, and Washtenaw County is covering costs for the hotel and related food expenses (with an expectation that 75% of the cost will be reimbursable by FEMA).

Prepared by: Teresa Gillotti, Community Development Director

Reviewed by: Derek Delacourt, Community Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Tom Crawford, Interim City Administrator

Whereas, Governor Whitmer has declared a state of emergency due to the presence of COVID-19 in the state and the Stay Home Stay Safe executive order;

Whereas, Homeless populations are not able to comply with the order, putting themselves and those they have contact with at risk for spread of COVID-19;

Whereas, the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (SAWC) is committed to providing shelter in line with the Washtenaw County Health Department requirements for physical separation including the current operation of 5 different Shelter locations;

Whereas, SAWC is incurring additional costs for 24/7 staffing at all sites, case management transportation, food, laundry, supplies and other unexpected expenses; and

Whereas, the City of Ann Arbor has long supported the homeless community and continues to work to keep all Ann Arbor residents safe during this unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic;

RESOLVED, That the City Council appropriates \$250,000 from the FY20 General Fund balance to the FY20 General Fund Community Development budget for the purposes of supporting Washtenaw County and the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County through the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development specifically by designating:

- \$125,000 contribution to cover costs incurred in March and April due to the rapid expansion of shelter locations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will be pro-rated

between the two entities based on costs incurred (assuming FEMA reimbursement when eligible)

- \$125,000 for future costs beginning May 1, 2020 that support COVID-19 response including use of the City's funding as required 25% local match for FEMA reimbursable expenses for County support and SAWC's operations. The funding will be pro-rated between the two entities based on costs incurred. If funds are not utilized, they will be returned to the City.

RESOLVED, That City Council provides authority to staff to approve a contract with the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County through Community Development for the expenditure of up to \$250,000.00 as described above;

RESOLVED, That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute the contract after approval as to substance by the City Administrator and approval as to form by the City Attorney;

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator be authorized to take all necessary actions to implement this resolution; and

RESOLVED, That the City Administrator shall deliver to Council within a reasonable amount of time an expense report detailing the use of these funds.

Sponsored by: Mayor Taylor, Councilmember Bannister, Eaton, Ramlawi, and Ackerman

As Amended by Ann Arbor City Council on May 4, 2020