

COBURG CITY COUNCIL MONTHLY REPORTS



TOPIC: OMA Homeless Response Proposed Expenditure Allocations

Meeting Date: December 13, 2022
Staff Contact: Anne Heath, City Administrator
Contact: 541-682-7871, anne.heath@ci.coburg.or.us

Council Action Requested:

Recommendation of most likely use of homeless response funds.

HISTORY

The Oregon Mayor's Association along with the League of Oregon Cities is supporting two budget proposals during the 2023 Legislative Session:

1. A budget package which provides direct allocation to cities for homelessness response and prevention
2. A budget package that provides a capital improvement funding for cities.

The proposed allocation to Coburg would be about \$52,800 to be utilized for this initiative. These funds could be spent in many areas including:

- Abatement/Clean-up
- Environmental mitigation
- Affordable housing
- Capital construction or improvement costs related to homelessness or affordable housing measures
- Community resource officers
- Education and outreach
- Food bank Assistance
- Shelter and/or transitional housing
- Hygiene Stations
- Operation Costs
- Outreach workers
- Prevention

Cities are being asked to provide information on the most likely use of the funds should we receive them.

CURRENT PROCESS FOR HOMELESS RESPONSE

Meeting the Needs of the homeless

The City of Coburg is situated along I-5 where there is a truck stop and highway commercial properties. These properties lend themselves to the homeless or unhoused who might arrive off the freeway, or by some other form of transportation be it bus, bike or by walking. This has increased in the last couple of years and is expected to continue into the future.

The City does not have public services outside of the Food Bank and local churches.

Our Police Department responds to calls multiple times a week regarding homeless camping and sleeping, living in cars, stranded near the freeway, and/or just passing through. Our Police try to identify the needs of the individual by having a friendly conversation and determining how the department can help. This might be in the form of:

1. A ride to shelters in the Lane County area such as the Mission
2. Assistance with gas or shelter
3. Assistance with car repairs
4. Assistance with transportation such as a bus ticket
5. Assistance with food, supplies or health needs

The City has established the CHETT Program, which is a donation-based revenue for the Police Department, which allows response to specific needs.

In Fiscal Year 2022, the City received \$720 in donations to the CHETT program, and \$410 was spent out. Donations are carried-over at the end of each year.

Abandoned Vehicles

An occurrence that is on the rise in all cities is abandoned vehicles and specifically motor homes, campers, vans, etc. which may be formerly used as housing. It is left up to the City to tow and/or dispose of these vehicles with the cost being absorbed by the taxpayers. Coburg has experienced an increase in this type of activity over the last few years.

Abandoned Property

Often property is left that must be cleaned up, and/or stored. The City cannot lawfully dispose of what might be considered personal property. What appears to be junk or trash could be considered more valuable to the homeless. Public Works often assists in the clean up of a scene, and then abandoned property is stored either at the sewer plant or in the Police storage at City Hall. These clean ups come at a cost to the City in both labor and expenses for disposal.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Coburg housing market is one of the highest in the county. Affordable housing, high-density housing, and low-income housing are hard to come by. Any available housing opportunities that become available are rented, leased or purchased very quickly.

BUDGET

Outside of the CHETT Program, the Police department budgets approximately \$2500, which covers the cost of towing of abandoned vehicles, clean up, etc.

SOME RECOMMENDED USES OF THE FUNDS:

- Set aside funds for abatement/clean-up
 - Food Bank Assistance
 - Education and Outreach to the community regarding homelessness
 - Affordable Housing – Partnership with local developer for a lower cost housing development, or fund a affordable housing analysis that provides recommendations
 - Hygiene Assistance such as showers and laundry services at truck-stop
 - Operational costs – Officer and Public Works response time for assistance to homeless
-

NEXT STEPS

City Administrator will forward the City's possible uses of the funds to OMA. If funds are approved through the state budget, then Coburg will receive approximately \$52,800. If funds are not approved, the at least we have had this discussion and identified areas in which the City could address the homeless crisis in our community.

REVIEWED THROUGH

Chief Larry Larson

Public Works Director Brian Harmon