REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title:	Homeless Facility Discussion
Preferred Agenda:	September 28, 2021
	September 9, 2021 (Work Session)
	August 25, 2021
Submitted By:	R. Towry, City Manager
Reviewed By:	J. Fisher, Admin. Services Mngr.
Type of Action:	Resolution ____ Motion ____ Roll Call ____ Other __X__
Relevant Code/Policy:	Martin v Boise/HB 2006/SHMC 9.20/SHMC 9.24
Towards Council Goal:	Be an Effective and Efficient Government
	Essential Services
Attachments:	DRAFT Rules, DRAFT Volunteer Duties, DRAFT Budget,
	HB 2006, Martin v Boise

Purpose of this RCA:

To gain consensus regarding strategies mitigating the effects of homelessness on the community.

Background/Context:

In 2018, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals heard the "Martin v Boise" regarding homelessness. The court held the homeless have an inherent "right to rest," thus criminalizing homelessness became a defined set of actions that included anti-camping ordinances or other ordinances that infringe upon a person's ability to rest on public property if they have no private property of their own to rest. The state of Oregon codified this finding, as well as "Blake v Grants Pass," in HB 2006.

Essentially, communities must provide a place for people who are experiencing homelessness or allow them to be on public property.

The Community Health Committee has been tasked by the Council to work towards a solution. They have been working hard on this project since then. Councilor Gourley, chair of the committee, will expand on and answer any questions regarding their work during the meeting.

While Council approved staff working with the County to develop a plan on the County property between 22nd and 24th Ave. along the railroad tracks. Linn County Commissioner Tucker has requested an official written request with exactly what the facility would entail. CM Towry wanted to ensure the Councill was on board with the overall theory and draft documents before putting in an official written request so there would be clarity among the Council on what that would look like.

The Challenge/Problem:

How does the City mitigate the impacts of homelessness on the community in a humane manner that encourages and empowers the homeless population to overcome the hurdles that cause their homelessness?

Stakeholders:

- Homeless – People who are experiencing homelessness have a protected right to rest and many are willing to engage with opportunities and services if the opportunity arises.
- Sweet Home Police Department – Our current situation does not allow our police department to enforce our ordinances. Likewise, having the homeless in a central location has demonstrated a higher rate of success helping to match people with services to treat the underlying cause(s) of and conditions.
- Business Community – The current situation does not create an inviting atmosphere for people to frequent our local businesses.
- Community Members – Community members are currently forced to deal with the accompanying issues that are coupled with a homeless population.
- Public Works – Public Works staff spend an immense amount of time cleaning up and dealing with the issues that accompany a homeless population.
- Sweet Home Fire & Ambulance – SHF&A also spends a significant amount of time and resources dealing with the homeless population. The current designated location has created a significant issue with their use of the old city hall building.
- Library Staff – Library staff spend a significant amount of their time helping homeless find resources on the public computers at the library. Staff is aware that people are avoiding the library because they feel uncomfortable with the homeless being there.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

The community is already spending +/- $120,000 a year on homeless individuals, they make up about 9% of the calls for service to the police department.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

A consensus to move forward with continued planning for a managed homeless center that would include a written proposal to Linn County to share their property.