

**City Council – Action Request Form**

**Date:** April 12, 2021

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**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

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**From:** Tasha Logan Ford, Assistant City Manager  
Marla Y. Newman, Community Development Director

**Council Action Requested:**  
Resolution Ratifying Continuation of a Temporary COVID-19 Shelter for Persons Who Are Experiencing Homelessness and Medically Fragile, and Funding not to Exceed \$95,199 Per Month to Support the Operation Thereof

**Strategic Focus Area:** Livable Neighborhoods

**Strategic Objective:** No

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** No

**Key Work Item:** No



**Summary of Information:**  
Through a collaborative process, the City of Winston-Salem, Forsyth County, and the United Way-coordinated Continuum of Care (CoC) established a COVID-19 action plan to provide support to persons experiencing homelessness who may be either COVID-impacted or medically fragile and at higher risk of death if exposed to COVID-19.

Pursuant to the plan, the County opened an isolation facility for COVID-impacted persons on April 16<sup>th</sup> and closed the facility on June 15<sup>th</sup>. During its operation, a total of 13 individuals were isolated at the shelter pending COVID-19 test results.

The City opened a temporary medically fragile shelter (MFS) on April 27<sup>th</sup>, consisting of 60 hotel rooms, with an option to increase to 80 rooms. Priority for rooms was based on first removing medically fragile persons from the congregate setting of area mass shelters and then moving the non-sheltered who are self-isolating in tents. The shelter was to operate for 90 days.

**Committee Action:**

<b>Committee</b>	Finance 4/12/2021	<b>Action</b>	Approval
	CDHGG 4/13/2021		
<b>For</b>	Unanimous	<b>Against</b>	
<b>Remarks:</b>			

Operation of the medically fragile site was managed by United Way, Bethesda Center for the Homeless (BCH), and City with Dwellings: A Community First Initiative (City with Dwellings or CwD) from April through August 2020. Beginning in September 2020 sole management was assumed by the Bethesda Center. Services include:

1. Three meals a day provided by Samaritan Ministries;
2. Regular medical checks for overall well-being, including temperature checks, and referral to external medical providers should the need arise;
3. Scheduled mental health and substance abuse care;
4. Case management for each individual to plan for transition from temporary shelter to permanent housing or return to the existing sheltering system; and
5. Additional supportive services to ensure a continuity of care.

Additional support for the medically fragile shelter is provided by Forsyth County Public Health, including Mobile Integrative Health, and the Department of Social Services. In rotating shifts, 11 staff have been onsite 24 hours per day. Two sworn law enforcement personnel have also been on site 24 hours a day. These staffing levels are maintained seven days a week.

Over the course of facility operation, a total of 109 guests have been assisted. Of the 84 guests who have exited, 65 individuals have moved to permanent housing, two exited to a skilled living facility, two are deceased, and 15 have exited to other places. Currently, 25 guests remain at the medically fragile shelter, including one infant. Fourteen of 24 adult guests have received their first COVID-19 vaccination, reducing their risk of contracting the virus. It is expected that three guests will transition to permanent housing by March 31, 2021 and the remaining by May 31, 2021.

With the decline in the number of hotel guests and the majority vaccinated for COVID-19, staff has again reduced the number of hotel floors from two to one—now 20 rooms—effective April 1, 2021.

Also, beginning December 1, 2020 City with Dwellings shifted its focus to operating a hotel-based winter shelter geared toward individuals who may suffer from mental illness or addiction. In prior years, area churches provided shelter to persons with whom CwD engages through street outreach. The winter shelter was funded by City CARES Act ESG (ESG-CV) and slated to end March 31, 2021. This shelter currently serves 21 persons, with seven expected to move into stable housing by March 31, 2021 and the remaining by April 14, 2021.

Based on the expected near-term transition of remaining hotel guests into permanent housing, currently supported by BCH and CwD, staff proposes supporting continued hotel shelter at the MFS through May 31, 2021 and the winter shelter through April 14, 2021. Average monthly operational costs are, not to exceed, as follows:

Winter Shelter (CwD)	\$12,367
MFS Shelter Staffing (BCH)	\$13,000
MFS Hotel (City)	\$34,332
MFS Security (City)	\$32,500

MFS Bio-Hazard Cleaning (City)	\$1,500
MFS Laundry (City)	\$1,500
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	\$95,199

On August 24, 2020, the City entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) to continue operation of the medically fragile shelter and obtain direct and full reimbursement from the State, dispensing with the need to seek reimbursement from FEMA. The MOA with NCEM will remain in effect until the Federal Government stops approving non-congregate sheltering activities, until Governor Cooper rescinds his State of Emergency declaration, or for one year, whichever date comes first. Staff seeks approval to extend operation of the medically fragile shelter as set out in the MOA with NCEM, with an end date of May 31, 2021, or until the Federal Government stops approving non-congregate sheltering activities, or Governor Cooper rescinds his State of Emergency declaration, whichever date comes first.

Staff also seeks approval of \$12,367 for the winter shelter from City ESG-CV funds, or Housing Finance Assistance Funds, which may be reimbursed by FEMA outside of the NCEM MOA.