

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION AMENDING THE HOMELESS STRATEGIES WORKGROUP TO EXPAND ITS MEMBERSHIP AND PURPOSE

WHEREAS, addressing homelessness is a complex issue requiring many partners and a variety of solutions; and

WHEREAS, large numbers of people without homes or secure access to housing endangers the health, safety, and welfare of the people, individuals, families, and children, and poses a threat to the environment and economic health of the community, and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County, through its Health Department, facilitates community wide planning, updates and oversees implementation of the *Plan to End Homelessness*, conducts the Point in Time Count, and provides housing and service related advocacy on behalf of people experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County Health Department's 2019 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count, an annual snapshot of homelessness in our community, showed the largest decrease in homelessness since 2012, with 14% fewer individuals living homeless than in 2018, and ongoing attention to this issue is required to sustain this trend; and

WHEREAS, a decrease in homelessness is in part attributable to the new 22 North supportive housing facility, expanded programming, and services provided by several local non-profit agencies who in 2018 collectively helped 2,281 individuals find temporary or permanent housing or financial assistance to prevent homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County partners with a number of agencies to provide access to safe and secure housing and shelter facilities as well as associated programming and services; and

WHEREAS, while Whatcom County remains committed to long-term and preventative solutions, the community needs decisive action from all local governments and many agencies in order to prevent further suffering and requires collaborative solutions to address this acute crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council adopted Resolution 2017-055, Establishing A Homeless Strategies Workgroup, on October 24, 2017; and

WHEREAS, the Homeless Strategies Workgroup evaluated eight potential locations for a 200-bed low-barrier shelter in Bellingham for further feasibility analysis; and

WHEREAS, the Homeless Strategies Workgroup acknowledged the need for a comprehensive approach, including strategies to address public health and safety, and strategies to end homelessness; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for different types of shelters including, but not limited to

- 'year round shelters' providing shelter all days during the year,
- 'temporary winter shelters' providing temporary shelter during cold weather, and
- 'severe weather shelters' or 'emergency shelters' providing temporary shelter during extreme cold weather events; and

WHEREAS, during the 2018 winter storm event, Fountain Community Church provided a temporary winter shelter at 211 Broadway, Bellingham. The City of Bellingham provided a daytime emergency shelter in the basement of the Bellingham Public Library at 210 Central Ave, and

Whatcom County provided an emergency shelter in the Garden Level Conference Room of the Civic Center building at 322 N. Commercial Street, Bellingham; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee identified potential partners for a severe weather shelter for 2019; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Whatcom County Council extends the work of the Homeless Strategies Workgroup ("workgroup") as an independent coalition; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Homeless Strategies Workgroup membership shall be expanded to include a broader range of partner organizations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the workgroup's purpose is to identify:

1. Additional temporary winter shelters,
2. Added capacity for year round shelters,
3. Additional opportunities to address the needs of the county's homeless population, and
4. Strategies to prevent people from having no other option than to sleep outside.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the workgroup shall be made up of the following representatives:

- Whatcom County Administration
- Two Whatcom County Council Members
- Two Bellingham City Council Members
- City of Bellingham Administration
- Small City Administration
- Law Enforcement
- EMS
- Port of Bellingham
- Lighthouse Mission Ministries
- Opportunity Council
- Homeless Advocate
- Tribal Nation
- Health Department Staff
- Housing Advisory Committee Representative
- Northwest Youth Services
- Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that:

- Meetings of the workgroup shall be open and accessible to the public and shall be subject to the Open Public Meetings Act.
- The workgroup shall determine its own meeting schedule, but shall attempt to complete its work as expeditiously as possible.
- Written and audio records of meetings, resolutions, findings, and recommendations shall be kept and such records shall be public.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2019.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown Davis, Clerk of the Council

Rud Browne, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor