



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD
KATHY I. LONG, Chair
STEVE BENNETT
LINDA PARKS
PETER C. FOY
JOHN C. ZARAGOZA

STEVE BENNETT
SUPERVISOR, FIRST DISTRICT
(805) 654-2703
FAX: (805) 654-2226
E-mail:steve.bennett@ventura.org

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF VENTURA

GOVERNMENT CENTER, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
800 SOUTH VICTORIA AVENUE, VENTURA, CALIFORNIA 93009

September 22, 2015

Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

SUBJECT: Recommendation of Supervisor Bennett and Supervisor Long to Direct the CEO to Reach Out to the Cities of Oxnard and Ventura and Their Partner Agencies Regarding Potential Use of the One-Time Homeless Matching Fund Set Aside to Address the Issue of Providing, at a Minimum, a Winter Warming Shelter in Each City

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Direct the CEO to reach out to the cities of Oxnard and Ventura regarding the one-time matching funds still available for year-round emergency shelters in support of the Updated 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness and address the immediate need to provide a foul weather/winter warming shelter and the longer-term need for emergency shelters.
2. Make a one-time exception to allow the cities and partner agencies to use in-kind contributions as the match.

DISCUSSION:

The cities of Oxnard and Ventura have the highest number of homeless individuals, accounting for two-thirds of the homeless population in Ventura County. In 2013, St. Vincent De Paul announced they would not be operating the winter warming shelter for Oxnard and Ventura this coming winter.

As we are all aware, the El Nino weather pattern is predicted to result in heavy rains this winter. To address this fast-approaching threat to the health and wellbeing of homeless residents of these cities, the non-profit service providers Community Action in Oxnard and Project Understanding, in Ventura, along with their partners, are putting together plans for shelters.

However, resources are needed to assist these agencies to complete their goals of establishing shelters before this winter weather hits and to meet Recommendation 7 – Shelters, of the revised Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. Recommendation 7 is to “create small local year-round emergency shelters which are intended to be short-term harbors while permanent housing solutions are sought.”

On June 5 2007, the County of Ventura adopted the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness in Ventura County. On April 6, 2010, the Board of Supervisors appropriated \$3,100,000 to encourage progress in areas of the plan in which progress was lagging, including \$2 million dollars in one-time matching funds on a two-to-one basis to cities or their partner agencies to build year-round emergency shelters in their communities. There remains \$1 million available following allocating funds for last year's family shelter-diversion and supplementing the HPRP programs.

A 5-Year Evaluation of the progress on the 10-Year Strategy to End Homelessness was completed in 2012, and the County adopted the Updated Strategy on February 5, 2013, including Recommendation 7 identified above.

The County of Ventura remains committed to facilitating our city partners' success in establishing permanent year-round emergency sheltering options for the upcoming winter season and beyond. While the intent is for the County's one-time matching funds to be used primarily for bricks and mortar improvements, it is recognized that there may be a gap in operational funding for this coming winter. Applications for operational funding from local (ESG and/or CDBG Public Service) and State (FESG) funding are typically made 6-9 months in advance of their availability so it may be necessary to identify gap funding for this upcoming winter season. The County's limited funds are appropriate to help fill that gap.

Further, to assist the cities, service providers and local volunteers with the matching fund component, we propose that in-kind services be counted toward the match; e.g. waiver of permit fees, volunteer hours spent performing case management or transportation expenses.

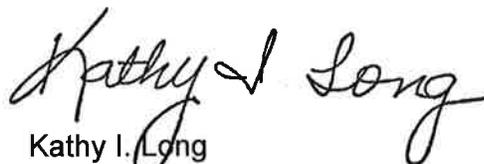
CEO Mike Powers spoke with Ventura City Manager Mark Watkins last week and they discussed the city's shelter planning. At that time Mr. Watkins indicated both cities may be coming to the County for assistance, and CEO Powers welcomed that idea. Working together, we can provide members of our community experiencing homelessness access to safe, clean emergency shelter and connection to services that may help them secure permanent housing in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cordially,



Steve Bennett
Supervisor, First District



Kathy I. Long
Supervisor, Third District