

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

DATE: April 7, 2017

TO: Sup. Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Héctor Colón, Director, Department of Health and Human Services
Prepared by: Mark Mertens, Delinquency and Court Services Administrator

SUBJECT: **Report from the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, requesting authorization to increase a 2017 purchase of service contract for the boy's shelter program with St. Charles within the Delinquency and Court Services Division (DCSD)**

Issue

The Director, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is requesting authorization to increase the 2017 purchase of service contract with St. Charles for the boy's shelter program.

Background

Shelter care provides short-term, non-secure, 24-hour supervised care and residential programming to youth. The program primarily serves youth pending court for alleged delinquency as an alternative to secure detention placement. Other youth involved in the juvenile justice court matters may be placed in shelter care at the discretion of either DCSD or the Children's Court.

In December 2016, the County Board authorized a four-month purchase of service contract for \$425,340 with St. Charles for January 1, 2017 through April 30, 2017 in order to operate the boy's shelter program for up to 12 beds (File No. 16-689). The intent was to implement a short-term contract with St. Charles while working with Wisconsin Community Services (WCS), which was awarded the 2017 shelter contract for boys and girls in February (File No. 17-84), to establish its shelter programming. The proposed boys' shelter facility is located at the Horizon House, 2511 W. Vine Street, Milwaukee and the proposed girls' shelter facility is located at 3790 N. 12th Street, Milwaukee.

Over the past few months, DCSD and WCS have been working diligently to develop comprehensive shelter programming as well as gather community input. WCS conducted door-to-door outreach in the Arlington Heights neighborhood (girls' shelter) and Midtown neighborhood (boys' shelter) the week of February 6 to 10, 2017. The Arlington Heights neighborhood community meeting occurred on February 15, 2017 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the St. Mark AME Church located at 1616 W. Atkinson Ave. Invited guests included Supervisor Willie Johnson, Milwaukee Alderwoman Milele Coggs and representatives from DCSD, including Division Administrator Mark Mertens. The Midtown neighborhood community meeting occurred on February 28, 2017 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the Horizon House located at 2511 W. Vine St. Invited guests included Supervisor Supreme Moore-Omokunde, Milwaukee Alderman Russell Stamper and Mr. Mertens.

The door-to-door outreach was conducted by five WCS staff members who have experience in canvassing and they went to every house and business in each neighborhood within a two-block radius during daylight hours. Each outreach person was given talking points to ensure a consistent message was communicated to neighbors. Flyers with the community meeting information, contact information and employment recruitment announcements were also circulated. The results of this survey were provided in February as part of File No. 17-84.

WCS staff met with Ald. Coggs on March 2 to discuss the girls' shelter and address any of her concerns. Ald. Coggs requested that WCS conduct further outreach in the surrounding community of the girls' shelter. As a result, WCS staff reached out to Arlington Heights residents and asked those who previously expressed verbal support for the shelter to sign letters of support or to call the office of Ald. Coggs.

WCS staff are scheduled to meet with Ald. Stamper on March 29 to address any concerns regarding the boys' shelter. Prior to this meeting, WCS reached out to residents who attended the February 28 community meeting and are working on securing letters of support from community members.

WCS submitted shelter care licensing applications to the State Department of Children and Families (DCF) on March 3 and is working to aggressively recruit Youth Care Workers and Supervisors for both the girls' and boys' shelters and to date, have received over 100 applications with many received from members of the communities in which the shelter programs are located.

WCS also continues to work with the building owners to prepare the sites for occupancy. On February 21, the City of Milwaukee Department of Neighborhood Services conducted an inspection of the girls' shelter location which resulted in a list of items that need to be corrected prior to occupancy. WCS plans to conduct a walkthrough of the girls' shelter location on March 30 to finalize improvement and space usage plans. Both facilities need to be rezoned by the City of Milwaukee for use as youth shelters. The girls' shelter location is before the City Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) on April 6. The Board granted a Special Use Variance for WCS to open a 12 bed girls shelter. The plan is to then move forward with the boys' shelter for the May agenda of BOZA.

WCS and DCSD are committed to working with the community to improve community safety and provide resources for residents. As a result of the information and comments made by residents of the Arlington Heights and Mid-Town neighborhoods, WCS will host two Community Resource Fairs in each neighborhood. The Arlington Heights Community Resource Fair is scheduled for April 18 from 4 to 6:00 p.m. at the St. Mark AME Church and the Mid-Town Community Resource Fair is scheduled for April 25 from 4 to 6:00 p.m. at Starms Discovery School, 2035 N. 25th St., Milwaukee. WCS will work with the elected officials from each neighborhood to make information available to the community.

The projected opening date for the girls' and boys' shelters is mid-June. However, depending upon the timing of the State and City approvals described in this report, this date could change.

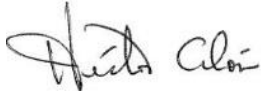
Approval to extend the St. Charles contract while WCS is preparing the shelter facilities and programming will ensure that there are community-based placement options for boys while pending court and that youth are not held in detention due to a lack of placement options.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the County Board of Supervisors authorize the Director, Department of Health and Human Services, or his designee, to increase the purchase of service contract with St. Charles for shelter care by \$425,340, from \$425,340 to a not-to-exceed amount of \$850,680, for the time period of May 1 through no later than August 31, 2017.

Fiscal Impact

A fiscal note form is attached.



Héctor Colón, Director
Department of Health and Human Services

- cc: County Executive Chris Abele
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