



# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 6/23/2020

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File #: 20-806

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**To:** Board of Supervisors  
**From:** DHHS: Administration  
**Agenda Section:** Consent

**SUBJECT:**  
Ratify Approval for Lease at 1140 4th St, Eureka

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**  
That the Board of Supervisors:  
1. Ratify and approve county's lease with HBJ Partnership on a month to month tenancy under all the terms and conditions of the lease.

**SOURCE OF FUNDING:**  
Public Health

**DISCUSSION:**  
On March 11, 2020, the Humboldt County Health Officer declared a local emergency as a result of the threat of COVID-19 which the Board of Supervisors ratified on March 17. On March 26, the Board authorized all department heads to execute agreements related to the declared emergency and required that all such agreements must be ratified by the Board of Supervisors at the next available Board meeting. On June 19, 2020, Director Connie Beck of DHHS executed a lease agreement with HBJ Partnership in order to secure non-congregate shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness who:

1. Test positive for COVID-19 that do not require hospitalization, but need isolation or quarantine (including those exiting from hospitals);
2. Have been exposed to COVID-19 (as documented by a state or local public health official, or medical health professional) that do not require hospitalization, but need isolation or quarantine; and
3. Are asymptomatic, but are at "high risk," such as people over 65 or who have certain underlying health conditions (respiratory, compromised immunities, chronic disease), and who require emergency non-congregate shelter as a social distancing measure.

Under the terms of the lease, the county is obligated to pay a daily rate of \$90.91 for all occupied rooms. The county will guarantee a minimum rent payment equivalent to the nightly rate for 22 rooms at 30 days per month totaling \$60,000.60 during the term of this agreement.

California has a demonstrated need for hotel and motel rooms around the state to immediately provide non-congregate shelter options for the sick and medically vulnerable. Individuals lacking stable housing are more likely to use hospital emergency rooms. In some places, individuals experiencing homelessness made up 20% to 30% of all adult hospital emergency room visits. Patients experiencing homelessness are admitted to inpatient units five times more often and have average lengths of stay that are longer than people who have stable housing. Protecting individuals experiencing homelessness will relieve pressure on the hospital system by separating high-risk individuals who are homeless from COVID-positive or persons under investigation, in order to protect public health and safety for the duration of this public health emergency.

On March 17, 2020 the Governor signed Senate Bill (SB) 89, which allocated \$100 million for shelter support and emergency housing to address COVID-19 among persons experiencing homelessness, with \$636,851.11 of that amount being allocated to Humboldt County. One of the intended uses of these funds is to support the provision of non-congregate shelter and necessary wrap-around services to persons experiencing homelessness.

Subsequent to the President's March 13, 2020 Nationwide Emergency Declaration for COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognized that non-congregate sheltering may be necessary in this Public Health Emergency to protect public health and save lives. The State of California, on behalf of local governments, sought and received approval from FEMA for emergency non-congregate shelter. This means that costs associated with providing non-congregate shelter through occupancy agreements and necessary wrap-around supports for individuals experiencing homelessness who are: COVID-19 positive; exposed to COVID-19 as verified by a health provider; or asymptomatic but "high risk," such as over 65 years old or with a underlying health condition, may be eligible for FEMA reimbursement at up to 75%. FEMA has extended the potential for reimbursement through June 30, 2020 and the State has informed county staff that it will continue to seek extensions until non-congregate shelter is no longer required as matter of public health.

DHHS recommends that your Board ratify the lease on a month to month tenancy period as described in the lease.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

On May 19, 2020, your Board approved a supplemental budget as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget Report for fiscal year (FY) 2019-20 to increase the budget for Fund 1175, Budget Unit 455 Public Health Preparedness to account for the increased costs related to COVID-19. The monthly lease amount for Humboldt Inn was included in the supplemental budget for FY 2019-20. The budget for FY 2020-21 will need to be amended to include COVID-19 expenses as the budgets were created prior to the pandemic.

Cost recovery efforts to support the monthly lease of this site and COVID-19 related response efforts will be sought through grant funds and FEMA reimbursement. The lease will be supported through the Public Health Fund, however the General Fund may be impacted if reimbursement of COVID-19

expenses are not received timely through state and federal funders.

**STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK:**

This action supports your Board's Strategic Framework by creating opportunities for improved safety and health and protecting vulnerable populations.

**OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:**

FEMA, California Office of Emergency Services

**ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Board discretion.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Humboldt Inn Lease

**PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:**

Board Order No.: D-1

Meeting of: 03/26/20

File No.: 20-419; 20-806