

# Council Study Session

December 6, 2022

<b>Agenda Item</b>	Resolution 2022-33 Setting Policies for Activating Severe Weather Emergency Shelter Facilitation	
<b>From</b>	Linda Reid	Housing Program Specialist
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## **SUMMARY**

At a [regular meeting](#) held on August 7, 2021 the City Council approved a motion to request that the Housing and Human Services Commission develop a proposal for addressing the need for shelter options during extreme weather events. The Council motion is as follows:

*Council requests the Housing and Human Services Commission work with local partners, as well as the staff and council liaisons to the commission, to identify the options available to comprehensively address the extreme weather needs of Ashland residents, including extreme cold, extreme heat, and dangerous levels of wildfire smoke. The Council further requests that the Housing and Human Services Commission develop a proposal for Council consideration regarding how the Ashland Community can best address these needs and the specific role the City will have in that process.*

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

### **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

The Council reviewed the Housing and Human Services Commission recommendations at a Study Session on [June 6, 2022](#). No direction was provided at that time.

### **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The City has had two resolutions that address how the City will respond to incidents of inclement winter weather. The current policy Resolution 2013-04, which replaced 2007-11, only set parameters for cold weather conditions under which the City would declare a weather emergency and commit City resources in the form of a City owned building. For many years the City had dedicated a small amount of funding to support staff time at partnering non-profit agencies to provide volunteer coordination, communication, and trainings in support of City initiated emergency shelters. The volunteer coordinator was also tasked with finding alternate locations if a City owned building was not available, and with communicating with other City staff who supported their efforts. This staff included Fire Department staff (Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coordinator) and Parks Department staff regarding the use of City owned buildings.

### **Stakeholder Outreach**

The Housing and Human Services Commission formed a Severe Climate Event Policy Recommendation Workgroup which met several times throughout the process of developing recommendations. The Workgroup created and implemented a plan to solicit stakeholder input to fulfill the Council's outreach request. This effort included soliciting input from those interfacing or serving impacted populations,

those who have had a role in the emergency shelter process in prior years, and those who have lived experience.

The workgroup also completed an audit of policies and best practice recommendations for severe and inclement weather shelters and parameters from other communities throughout Oregon and the nation. Information from prior programs implemented by the City of Ashland in partnership with area non-profits also informed the efforts of the workgroup. The workgroup evaluated information regarding the health impacts of extreme Weather events from a variety of resources, including but not limited to, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal department of Health and Human Services, and non-profit organizations who advocate for special populations.

The Weather Event Policy Recommendation Workgroup used these policy documents from other communities as a template to provide a framework for the discussion and as a way to clarify and organize the key elements that a comprehensive and inclusive policy should address. These elements were utilized as discussion topic prompts for both the stakeholder listening sessions as well as for the discussion among the full commission.

The feedback from the stakeholder listening sessions, including an additional debrief meeting after enacting a severe Weather shelter event, was utilized to help inform the development of a draft resolution which would replace Res. 2013-04 if approved by the City Council. Model language, policies, and structural processes gleaned from research and resource audits of policies and practices from other communities were combined to develop recommendations for inclusion into the draft resolution. These recommendations were provided back to the full Housing and Human Services Commission as a starting point for discussion. The key elements of a comprehensive policy are outlined below, as well as the recommendation that resulted from the discussion of the full commission.

### **City's Role in Instances of Severe Weather Event Emergency Shelter:**

- Shelter Activation and Coordination using a phone tree model
- Establish a Decision-Making Activator team like that established by the City of Medford
- Identify staff to fulfill specific duties: City Manager-Shelter activator; Communication Coordinator between paid shelter coordinator and city staff involved/concerned with sheltering activities, City Council and Administration; Public Information Officer/Nixle alerts/CERT activation.
- Provide City Buildings when needed, even if prior uses/reservations must be cancelled.
- Provide ongoing funding for contract volunteer/shelter coordination services from an area non-profit service provider or in-house through existing staff.
- Provide a platform for communications between Decision Making Activator Team and shelter coordinators through an online platform that allows real time communication and updates accessible by those inside and outside the City (create a OneDrive account)
- Facilitate a regular ongoing emergency shelter group meeting to debrief after shelter events and for planning and coordination for future shelter events and needs, which could include volunteer trainings, coordination with potential providers of shelter locations and volunteers, and to communicate regionally.
- Provide materials and resources as needed (air purifiers/PPE) and in house targeted training (through CERT).

## Policy Recommendations details

1. *The policy will set parameters for extreme temperatures both hot and cold and during extreme weather events, and for instances of bad air quality.*

The commissioners discussed a number of different temperature thresholds. The commissioners also discussed feedback from stakeholders, and their own concerns about the difficulties of balancing what most felt to be morally and ethically right with the realities of limited resources and what could be reasonably accomplished. The Commissioners agreed that in an ideal world the thresholds be more reflective of public health needs, however, they also agreed that the City should not adopt guidelines where the triggers for emergency shelter outpace the City and community's ability to enact shelters. The City's guidelines should have flexibility, which would set the thresholds as a baseline but still allow for the calling of shelters as needed. For example, in instances when the National Weather Service issues severe weather warnings that may necessitate calling for a shelter outside of any set temperature thresholds.

2. *The policy will identify a coordinator for identification and coordination of shelter locations.*

Feedback regarding shelter locations included a recognition that daytime cooling and smoke shelters could be accommodated in most publicly owned buildings or building which are open to the public. These buildings would potentially be in use and open to the public during the daytime shelter operational hours, and as such would be available to shelter members of the public and could be used for respite from Weather conditions without the need for volunteer oversight. Overnight shelters generally operate outside of normal business hours and may have different safety code requirements to accommodate an overnight use, therefore a coordinator is needed to organize volunteers and to provided overnight shelter coordination. There was a consensus among stakeholders and the Housing and Human Services Commission that city buildings should be made available for Severe Weather Event sheltering purposes, even if they have previously been reserved for use as rentals or for recreational purposes. City owned buildings specifically discussed for shelter uses included Pioneer Hall (it has been discussed that Pioneer Hall is preferred, however, there are needed repairs to this building to accommodate an overnight use), the Community Center, and the Grove.

3. *The policy should outline an internal City process for shelter activation and clarify the City's role in the process for the opening and operations of an emergency shelter due to severe weather conditions. It is recommended that a severe weather shelter team should be identified and included in the plan. It is recommended that communication should be City's primary role, and that the City should set aside resources to fund a shelter coordinator through a contract with an outside agency, which is how the City has supported this role in the past.*

It is recommended that communication should be City's primary role. The City should identify a Decision-Making Activator Team (similar to the process that the City of Medford has identified) with the City Manager acting as the lead. The team would resemble a phone tree of sorts, with the City Manager as the leader at the top of the tree in making the determination to call a shelter, a designated staff person would be identified and tasked with issuing a notification for both the need for volunteers as well as to post public information regarding the availability of shelter spaces. The shelter implementation plan could potentially issue a call to the existing CERT volunteer lists (or to specific CERT volunteers who have attended trainings specific to sheltering events) and would also issue a NIXLE alert. Another role for the designated City staff person would be to coordinate communications

between members of the Decision-Making Activator Team, relevant City staff involved in specific aspects of shelter organization (such as law enforcement, parks department staff, and administration) and any community members or non-profit entities serving in a paid/contracted volunteer coordination role.

4. *The plan should coordinate a group of people inside and outside of the City to work together to implement an Extreme Weather Event shelter.*

City staff and other community stakeholders should work together to identify and secure resources to implement severe weather event shelters. This includes ongoing regular cooperation, communication, and collaboration to coordinate volunteer lists and other resources to support volunteers (like offering shelter specific trainings) locally and regionally. There was agreement for the desire to, “center the voices with lived experience”. Focused on those who are needing respite during emergent events, such as seniors, low-income/fixed income households, people with disabilities, medically fragile individuals, and other vulnerable populations. It has also been suggested that the City create a central online volunteer list which can be accessed by both City Staff members of the Decision-Making Activator team and community partners involved in shelter organization to facilitate communication and coordination.

5. *Each shelter should have a scheduled debrief under an action/reflection model.*

This is part of the ongoing local and regional coordination that should result in improved process and best practices.

6. *City’s role with regard to resource needs.*

A review of other City’s policies has shown that there are a minority of City’s that provide direct funding to support Severe Weather Event/Emergency Sheltering activities. The feedback received through the stakeholder outreach events revealed that many stakeholders feel that the City’s role should be to provide more resources, including funding to support short term shelters. Stakeholders felt that the City relies too heavily on churches for providing locations, volunteers, and resources. Within the community, the volunteer pool is aging and is less able to provide the same level of service as in years past and many would like to see the City provide more resources to support short term shelters. These resources include:

- Locations for hosting shelters-which could impact City revenues through reduced classes/rental income.
- Direct funding to support volunteer training, coordination and support (though not necessarily through providing a City a staff person to do these activities, but could be part of an existing staff’s responsibilities).
- Direct funding to support the resource needs of the shelter.
- Materials (air purifiers, etc.)
- In-Kind donations

## **Recommendations Overview:**

### Housing and Human Services Commission recommendations for new thresholds for activating a Severe Weather Event shelter:

- The threshold for calling a cold weather shelter should be changed to 32 degrees or below (considering such factors as: wind chill, precipitation, number of days' duration) or in instances where the National Weather Service issues a Weather Warning.
- The threshold for calling an extreme heat shelter should be 95 degrees or above depending upon other factors such as humidity, UV index, and overnight lows or in instances where the National Weather Service issues an Extreme Heat warning.
- The threshold for calling a smoke related shelter should be an air quality index of 150 and above or designation of "unhealthy for everyone") or above.

### City Manager Recommendations for new thresholds for activating a Severe Weather Event Shelter:

The City Manager agrees that the general threshold for calling a cold weather shelter should be changed to 32 degrees or below (considering such factors as wind chill, precipitation, number of days' duration) or in instances where the National Weather Service issues a Weather Warning. The City Manager's calling or activating a severe weather shelter is subject to practical considerations which may include, but are not limited to, identifying an available facility/facilities appropriate for the intended use, the ability to operate the shelter(s) in a safe manner for all potential users and supporting volunteers/staffing, the capacity of the shelter operations to adhere to the Severe Weather Shelter Operations Policy (see current policy in attached Resolution 2022-33), and the availability and level of necessary resources to support shelter operation. Necessary resources include volunteer support and contracted/city staffing, authorized and available funding. The City's ability to address or manage practical considerations will impact its ability to call for or maintain over time a severe weather shelter. All other threshold recommendations are consistent with those put forward by the Housing and Human Services Commission.

### Ashland Fire and Rescue Recommendations:

The Council may also wish to consider the following feedback from Ashland Fire and Rescue regarding the Extreme Weather Shelter Resolution.

- CERT volunteers can be solicited annually to participate in shelter training and mobilization. CERT does not have capacity to staff every shelter, nor should all members be solicited for each and every declared shelter.
- To address liability and provide a safe environment for volunteers and staff, training classes specific to shelter operations needs to be provided to CERT volunteers. CERT basic training is inadequate for shelter staffing.
- There were challenges in declaring shelters based on forecasted heat, humidity, etc... AF&R has experience with staffing for red flag warning fire danger conditions and based on that we recommend declaring shelters when the National Weather Service in Medford issues a Warning for excessive heat. The warning system is built for community safety and protection and the triggers for a Warning should be sufficient for shelter declaration. The proposed triggers are too confusing and would lead to volunteer burn out, already a problem this past summer.
- We fully support hiring a third-party administrator of the shelter program in order to address liability concerns and alleviate the burden on City staff.

## **FISCAL IMPACTS**

The fiscal impacts range based on the City's level of involvement, the provision of locations for hosting shelters, and the adoption of thresholds which have the potential to increase the number of shelters days called each year.

The City has supported a shelter coordinator in the past through a contract with a non-profit organization. The recommendation is to do so again. This accomplishes a couple of different goals. It removes the City from liability for operation of emergency sheltering activities, as the City's insurance policy does not presently cover such activities. Contracting with a non-profit organization to coordinate sheltering activities provides City staff and community partners both continuity and efficiency in the process, neither of which exists in the current process. The City does not currently have a dedicated staff position who has emergency shelter coordination as part of their job descriptions. Consequently, there are several staff members who must forego their regular responsibilities to organize sheltering events, and this leads to other priority and/or time sensitive work to be delayed, and also to confusion in communications internally and externally as the staff member who is addressing emergency shelter may be different for any given event. The current impromptu process is cumbersome and inefficient for both staff and community partners, causing unnecessary miscommunication and can result in the City's inability to open a shelter.

In prior years, the City supported a third-party emergency shelter coordinator through a contract with a non-profit homeless services provider. The funding for those activities did not come from the Community Development Department budget nor the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. During the pandemic the City was able to utilize Affordable Housing Trust funds to support emergency sheltering activities due to the emergency declaration. Resolution 2008-034, which guides the use of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, identifies transitional and emergency shelter offered through an *"established program to move people toward self-sufficiency"* as an eligible activity for the use of funds. An intermittent Severe Weather Event Shelter would not provide services to assist people in moving to self-sufficiency, and as such does not address the housing objectives outline in Resolution 2008-034. City Administration has recommended the use of City contingency funds to pay for the immediate costs of supporting the provision of emergency sheltering activities for this winter, and setting aside funding in the next budget cycle to support emergency sheltering activities in the future.

## **STAFF AND COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

Staff would like direction and a clear process in how the City addresses the need for emergency sheltering during severe Weather events. The Housing and Human Services Commission is recommending the points above to be included in a new Resolution that supersedes all prior inclement weather policies and sets forth new and comprehensive thresholds for calling for the opening of an emergency shelter in the instances of severe Weather events. The draft resolution also outlines a process for enacting a shelter and defines the City's role in that process. The draft resolution attached will need to be reviewed by the City's legal counsel and further changes may be recommended pending legal review.

## **ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

Adopt Resolution 2022-33 that supersedes all prior inclement weather policies and sets forth new and comprehensive thresholds for calling an emergency shelter in the instances of severe Weather events and outlines a process for enacting a shelter and defines the City's role in that process.

## **REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

- Resolution 2022-33 A Resolution Repealing Resolutions No. 2013-04 and Setting Policies and Conditions Under Which Ashland Will Activate Severe Weather Emergency Shelter Facilitation
- Resolution 2013-04
- History of Emergency Shelter in Ashland

## RESOLUTION N O . 2022-33

### A RESOLUTION REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 2013-04 AND SETTING POLICIES AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH ASHLAND WILL ACTIVATE SEVERE WEATHER EMERGENCY SHELTER FACILITATION

#### RECITALS:

- A. Ashland is in an area that has four distinct seasons, all of which can exhibit extreme conditions due to severe weather events that can be hazardous to persons without access to adequate heating, cooling, sheltering or air quality resources.
- B. The City of Ashland desires to set forth the conditions under which it will call for the availability of protective or emergency sheltering during severe weather-related events and the policies related to the procedures the City will take to determine when to call of a shelter and how the City will coordinate with community volunteers and disseminate information on such emergency shelter.

#### THE CITY OF ASHLAND RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

**SECTION 1.** This resolution repeals and replaces Resolution 2013-04.

#### **SECTION 2. Provision of Emergency Shelter During Severe Weather Events**

- 1) Ashland will facilitate the provision of protective or emergency shelter within available resources as set forth here during times of extreme weather. Calling or activating a severe weather shelter is subject to practical considerations which may include, but are not limited to, identifying an available facility/facilities appropriate for the intended use, the ability to operate the shelter(s) in a safe manner for all potential users and supporting volunteers/staffing, the capacity of the shelter operations to adhere to the Severe Weather Shelter Operations Policy (attached), and the availability and level of necessary resources to support shelter operation. Necessary resources include volunteer support and contracted/city staffing, authorized and available funding. The City's ability to address or manage practical considerations will impact its ability to call for or maintain over time a severe weather shelter. For purposes herein, weather conditions shall be considered extreme under the following:
  - The general threshold for calling a cold weather shelter: 32 degrees or below considering such factors as wind chill, precipitation, number of days' duration or in instances where the National Weather Service issues a Weather Warning.
  - The general threshold for calling an extreme heat shelter: 98 degrees or above depending upon other factors such as humidity, UV index, and overnight lows or in instances where the National Weather Service issues an Extreme Heat warning.
  - The threshold for calling a smoke related shelter: an air quality index of 150 and above or designation of "unhealthy for everyone") or above.



- And/or any combination of weather conditions, community circumstances including interruption of electric or essential city services, which, at the discretion of the City Manager, or their designee, make conditions hazardous to human life without adequate shelter.

### **SECTION 3. City's Role in Instances of Emergency Shelter**

1) The City Manager, or their designee, will fulfill the following duties:

- Shelter Activation: Determine when the City will activate the provision or opening of protective or emergency shelter and approve the use of City resources for this purpose.
- **48 Hour Notice: The City will strive to provide 48-hour notice, unless in times of sudden severe weather conditions to contracted shelter provider to allow ample time for volunteer coordination and dissemination of information to the public.**
- Communication: Communicate between internal City staff and the community. This will include communication between non-profits contracted to provide shelter coordination and City staff involved/concerned with sheltering activities, including but not limited to staff from Emergency Operations, Ashland Fire and Rescue, the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Coordinator or other AFR staff as designated by the Fire Chief, Ashland Police, Ashland Parks and Recreation, and City Administration, as well as with the Mayor and City Council, and other elected and appointed officials.

Communication will include coordination with or use of Nixle alerts as appropriate. The communication should provide information to the public regarding shelter information, which could include posting new items on the City's website, notifying 211, and posting information about shelters on the City's social media platforms.

- Shelter Coordination: Protective and emergency weather shelter will be staffed by community and/or CERT volunteers. The City will take steps within funding appropriated for the purpose to contract with a third-party non-profit organization to provide shelter coordination and oversight, including volunteer coordination and the provision of liability insurance to cover all emergency shelter related activities. Contracted shelter coordination may also include soliciting, vetting, and providing trainings to shelter volunteers (in coordination with CERT volunteer trainings), maintaining a shelter volunteer contact list, and coordinating with the City staff regarding background checks for shelter volunteers. These items and any additional duties will be outlined in a separate shelter coordinator service contract.

The City will arrange for the provision of materials and resources as needed to protect those managing and utilizing its facilitated emergency shelter. Materials and resources will also be made available for the training of protective and emergency shelter associated staff and volunteers.

Shelter coordination should also include periodic or regular meetings as necessary between City staff, the non-profit shelter coordinator and volunteer participants/stakeholders to debrief event management and review shelter processes/procedures for planning and coordinating improvement.

- 2) Emergency shelter during or in anticipation of a severe weather event may require the use of an available city owned building/facility. Previously booked/scheduled groups in those locations will be subject to cancellation in such a case. The City will endeavor to establish an appropriate, permanent location and facility for emergency weather shelter for the community.

#### **SECTION 4. Severe Weather Activation**

Provisions for emergency shelter will be activated as follows:

- a) When the City Manager, or their designee, determines that weather conditions are or are likely to become "extreme," they will contact the City's Emergency Operations Officer or CERT Coordinator to confirm the emergency circumstances and activate the provision of protective or emergency shelter.
- b) Emergency Operations Officer or CERT Coordinator will, in turn, contact the following:
  - City's non-profit shelter coordinator to determine the feasibility of initiating emergency shelter operations, including the availability of volunteer staffing, and
  - The City's Parks and Recreation Department and other facilities management to determine if a city facility or facilities are available for the sheltering event. If no suitable City building is available, city staff and the non-profit shelter coordinator will work with community partners toward securing a sheltering location elsewhere in the city.
- c) The Non-profit Shelter Coordinator will contact designated representatives from volunteer organizations to arrange for on-site volunteers at the shelter.
- d) The CERT Coordinator or other AFR staff as designated by the Fire Chief, will put out a call for volunteers through the CERT system annually to notify them of shelter training availability.
- e) Shelter volunteers should bring their own cell phones in case of emergency.

**SECTION 5. Emergency shelter will be operated consistent with the attached Severe Weather Shelter Operations Policy.**

**SECTION 6.** This resolution takes effect upon signing by the Mayor.

ADOPTED by the City Council this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Melissa Huhtala, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Akins, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Doug McGeary, Interim City Attorney

**CITY OF ASHLAND**  
**Severe Weather Shelter Operations Policy\***  
October 31, 2022

There are several options for respite in the City of Ashland for most severe weather impacts. Each of the community respite options listed below are independent of City services, and therefore have no direct City supervision. Correspondingly, they each have their own hours of operation and rules of conduct. The Ashland community's approach to providing respite resources is predicated on the severity of current weather conditions and level of sheltering need, the availability of community support volunteers and/or contracted staffing, and the availability of appropriate sheltering facility opportunities.

In instances of episodic hot weather, or moderate smoke conditions, or any combination of thereof, the City defers to existing community resources, including public facilities, if they offer operation hours coinciding with such instances of severe weather. Public facilities include buildings open to the public during normal business hours where populations can find respite from weather conditions. These facilities include public libraries, shopping centers/malls, community centers and senior centers. The City also offers a variety of options for staying cool through its Parks and Recreation Department. These resources can be found through the link "[Find Respite in a Park.](#)" Additionally, the City's fire stations offer chilled water daily and police officers carry water in their vehicles to provide to citizens in need.

In instances of prolonged extreme conditions and or severe weather conditions that pose an imminent threat to the health and safety of vulnerable populations, the City Manager has the discretion to declare a severe weather emergency and authorize the use of City resources such as buildings or staff time to open a respite shelter. Vulnerable populations may include families with children, the elderly, and the houseless. City initiated shelters can be temporary, to address cooling or warming during peak hours of a severe weather incident or can be for much longer periods such as overnight to provide respite for the duration of a severe weather event. City initiated shelters are to be supervised, provide access to all populations, have proscribed hours of operation, and may provide refreshments or meals, based on the type and duration of the weather emergency and the generosity of community members. While the City Manager can authorize the opening of a shelter, whether and what type of shelter the City is able to open is entirely dependent on the circumstances of the weather-related emergency, and the circumstances related to available and appropriate resources. Circumstances may include the occurrence of utility service interruption. Traditionally the City has relied on volunteer hosts to run the shelters and often relies on community volunteers to organize shelter hosts and donations of refreshments. Similarly, the City does not have a single location that is consistently available and appropriate for all weather-related situations. Consequently, if City staff and volunteers cannot secure a location that is appropriate to address the needs of the climate related situation or find enough volunteers to serve as hosts, the City cannot open a shelter. Generally, there are four levels of shelter that may be enacted to address a range of severe climate incidents within the City of Ashland:

1. Cooling/Warming locations (non-supervised location; public access for normal business hours and available space only; chilled water available at City Fire Stations)
2. Peak Time Cooling/Warming Shelter (volunteer supervised; public access for arranged hours and available space only; drinks and light food items may be provided if available)
3. Overnight Cooling/Warming Shelter (volunteer supervised; public access for arranged hours and available space only; drinks and one meal provided)
4. Emergency Shelter (City supervised; public access as arranged; food and water provided as needed)

### **Emergency Locations or Shelter Policies.**

Operation of the emergency location or shelters shall, to the greatest extent feasible, comply with the following policy guidelines. Violators will be expelled/removed from shelter and may be barred from future access/use (temporary or permanent).

1. Shelter services must be provided with dignity, care, and concern for the individuals involved.
2. The buildings used as shelter must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition at all times and must comply with City, County and State Building, Fire and Health Codes, unless exemptions have been obtained from the appropriate agencies.
3. Shelter(s) locations and times will be based on the impacts of the severe climate events. For overnight sheltering events, doors will be locked at a designated time. Guests may leave the shelter but not re-enter after the doors are locked for the night. Guests arriving at the shelter after the designated times will not be admitted unless brought to the shelter by a police officer or unless prior arrangements have been made for late entry.
4. Shelters should have adequate separation of families and singles, and adequate separation of single women.
5. No drugs, alcohol, or weapons will be allowed on/in shelter property at any time.
6. No disorderly conduct will be tolerated, including no threatening or abusive language, and no excessive noise (e.g., yelling/shouting, loud radios, etc.).
7. Smoking will be restricted to the outdoors in designated areas only.
8. Guests should maintain their own areas in an orderly condition and may be assigned other responsibilities or tasks at the shelter.
9. Dogs and service/emotional support animals may be allowed per the policy of the provided emergency location or shelter's owner. If allowed, dogs and service/emotional support animals must be under the constant control of their owner or sponsoring shelter

guest at all times. Owners/guests are responsible for the care and oversight of their dog or service/emotional support animals at all times while on shelter premises, including for preventing their disorderly conduct. Animals that become threatening to others or are otherwise unmanageable will be required to leave the shelter.

10. Owners/shelter guests must be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing any areas soiled by a dog or service/emotional support animal. Such cleaning is to be done to the satisfaction of supervising shelter volunteer or facility City staff for the location where the shelter is being held.
11. Shelter volunteers or City staff must notify Jackson County Animal Control in the event a dog or service/emotional support animal bite breaks the skin of an emergency shelter guest or volunteer.

\* This Severe Weather Shelter Operations Policy is subject to update or change at the discretion of the City Manager in order to assure the safe and efficient operation of a Severe Weather Shelter within available resources. The City Manager will inform the City Council and its Housing and Human Services Advisory Committee of updates or changes.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2013-04**

**A RESOLUTION SETTING FORTH POLICIES AND CONDITIONS  
UNDER WHICH ASHLAND WILL PROVIDE EXTREME WEATHER  
RELATED EMERGENCY SHELTER HOUSING AND REPEALING  
RESOLUTION NO. 2007-11**

**RECITALS:**

- A. Ashland is located in an area that has four distinct seasons, and the winter season can have weather extremes that can be hazardous to persons without adequate shelter.
- B. The City of Ashland desires to set forth the conditions under which it will provide emergency shelter housing and the policies related to those staffing or utilizing such emergency shelter.

**THE CITY OF ASHLAND RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

SECTION 1. Provision of Emergency Shelter.

Ashland will provide emergency shelter under the terms and conditions set forth herein during times of extreme weather conditions. For purposes herein, weather conditions shall be considered extreme when outside temperatures are 20° F or below or a combination of weather conditions, in the discretion of the City Administrator, make conditions hazardous to human life without adequate shelter.

SECTION 2. Terms and Conditions.

- 1) In the event of the need for an emergency shelter during extreme weather, an available city-owned building such as the Grove or Pioneer Hall may be used. Previously booked groups in those locations may be subject to cancellation.
- 2) The shelter will be staffed by volunteers from nonprofit organizations or other organizations in the business of providing for the needs of persons. The city's insurance company requires organizations providing volunteers to provide a letter to the City of Ashland stating that all shelter volunteers have received appropriate training to staff a shelter and have passed criminal background checks.
- 3) Shelter(s) will open at 8:00 p.m. Doors will be locked at 9:00 p.m. Guests may leave the shelter but not re-enter after 9:00 p.m. Guests arriving at the shelter after 9:00 p.m. will not be admitted unless brought to the shelter by a police officer. Guests must vacate the shelter no later than 8:00 a.m. the following morning.
- 4) Shelters must have separate restrooms for men and women and separate sleeping spaces for single men, for single women and for families. Children must not be left alone in the shelter, and signage must be conspicuously displayed to remind guests and volunteers of this requirement.

5) The shelter must contain an emergency box with a first aid kit. Shelter volunteers should bring their own cell phones in case of emergency.

### SECTION 3. Emergency Shelter Activation.

Provisions for emergency shelter will be activated as follows:

- 1) When the City Administrator or designee determines that weather conditions are or are likely to become “extreme,” he/she will contact the City’s CERT Coordinator.
- 2) The CERT Coordinator will contact the Parks and Recreation to determine which facility or facilities will be used as an emergency shelter.
- 3) The CERT Coordinator will contact designated representatives from volunteer organizations to arrange for staff volunteers at the shelter.
- 4) Volunteers and guests are responsible for following the same cleaning requirements as other groups.

### SECTION 4. Emergency Shelter Policies.

Operation of the emergency shelters shall, to the greatest extent feasible, comply with the following policy guidelines:

- 1) Shelter services must be provided with dignity, care, and concern for the individuals involved.
- 2) The buildings used as shelter must be maintained in a safe and sanitary condition at all times and must comply with City, County and State Building, Fire and Health Codes, unless exemptions have been obtained from the appropriate agencies..
- 3) In all Shelters, there should be adequate separation of families and singles, and adequate separation of single women.
- 4) No drugs, alcohol, or weapons will be allowed in shelter property at any time.
- 5) No disorderly conduct will be tolerated.
- 6) No threatening or abusive language will be tolerated.
- 7) No excessive noise will be tolerated, e.g. loud radios etc.
- 8) Smoking will be restricted to the outdoors in designated areas.
- 9) Guests should maintain their own areas in an orderly condition and may be assigned other responsibilities or tasks at the shelter.



SECTION 5. Dogs

Dogs may be permitted in an emergency shelter under the following circumstances:

- 1) Shelter volunteers must designate a specific area in the shelter for dogs. The floor of such area must be covered with thick plastic.
- 2) Dogs must remain in crates while in the shelter. Crates will not be provided, stored, repaired or cleaned by the City of Ashland and must be removed from the shelter when it is vacated.
- 3) If taken outside for biological needs, dogs must be leashed.
- 4) Shelter volunteers are to devise and follow procedures to keep dogs away from each other and other guests as they are being housed for the night and as they exit in the morning.
- 5) Shelter volunteers must be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing any areas soiled by a dog or dogs. Such cleaning is to be done to the satisfaction of City facilities maintenance staff.
- 6) Dogs that become threatening to others or are otherwise unmanageable will be required to leave the shelter.
- 7) Shelter volunteers must notify Jackson County Animal Control in the event a dog bite breaks the skin of an emergency shelter guest or volunteer.

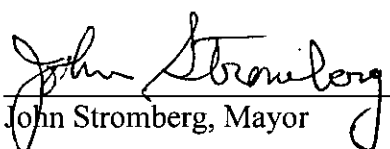
SECTION 6. Resolution No. 2007-11 is hereby repealed.

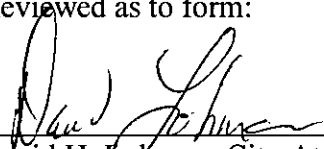
SECTION 7. This resolution takes effect upon signing by the Mayor.

This resolution was duly PASSED and ADOPTED this 5 day of March, 2013, and takes effect upon signing by the Mayor.

  
Barbara Christensen, City Recorder

SIGNED and APPROVED this 5 day of March 2013 ~~2012~~ BC

  
John Stromberg, Mayor

Reviewed as to form:  
  
David H. Lohman, City Attorney

## **HISTORY OF HOMELESS SHELTERS IN ASHLAND**

In 2007, the Ashland City Council approved a resolution setting forth policies and conditions under which the city will provide emergency shelter for homeless and other individuals during severe weather conditions. The resolution stated that in the event of the need for an emergency shelter during extreme weather, the use of Pioneer Hall or other available city-owned buildings might be used. The resolution also stated that temporary shelters would be staffed by community volunteers organized and trained by the private community members or non-profit homeless service providers. The resolution identified a temperature threshold of 20 degrees for calling a shelter, or when the City Administrator deemed it necessary to protect life and safety.

That same year two Ashland citizens: Ruth Coulthard and Barbie Breneiser, began offering emergency winter shelters at the Presbyterian Church. In the winter of 2009, they began hosting regular Sunday night shelters in addition to Emergency Shelters, from December to February. Ashland experiences “extreme weather” conditions primarily during the winter months where temperatures can drop below 20 degrees, and exposure to the elements can be hazardous to persons without adequate shelter. In 2009, the City turned over the responsibility of initiating, staffing, and running the emergency cold weather shelters to the local churches who had been volunteering their space and resources to that purpose.

In 2010, the City created an Ad Hoc Homelessness Steering Committee to develop solutions to issues of Homelessness in Ashland. One of the goals of the Ad Hoc Homelessness Steering Committee (HCS) was to expand those efforts at offering shelter to homeless populations on a weekly basis throughout the winter months. To that end the HCS convened two meetings in which the group sent out invitations to all the faith-based groups within the City as well as providers of social services. Out of these meetings came a comprehensive local resource guide, and two additional shelter nights a week. The Trinity Episcopal Church offered space and volunteers for a weekly shelter to be held from mid-November through the end of April. The Unitarian Universalist Church partnered with the Temple Emek Shalom to ask the City to donate the use of a City owned building in which to hold a weekly shelter which would be staffed by volunteers from the each congregation and the public. The City granted the use of Pioneer Hall on Thursday nights and in 2013 the City approved the use of Pioneer hall for an additional night bringing the weekly shelter nights to a total of four nights a week from November to April. These efforts were further supported by the HSC by offering an annual volunteer training as well as setting up and maintaining an online volunteer sign up for all four weekly shelters.

The HSC was dissolved in 2014 and a community volunteer continued serving as the volunteer coordinator until ACCESS, the Jackson County’s Community Action Agency provided grant funding to support Options for Helping Residents of Ashland (OHRA) staff to take on coordination of shelter volunteers during the winter months. OHRA continued to coordinate the "no frills" winter shelter during the cold winter months, beginning the week before Thanksgiving, and continuing through mid-April each year, from 2016-2018. From November through April volunteers, churches and the City continued coordination efforts with OHRA to offer five nights of shelter every week and during incidents of extreme bad weather. In the winter of 2016 alone more than 100 community volunteers provided 88 nights of shelter, with an additional six Emergency Shelter nights, serving more than 900 guests in total.

In 2018 Options for Homeless Residents of Ashland (OHRA) in coordination with Access, the community action agency of Jackson County, the City of Ashland, members of the faith community, and dedicated volunteers worked diligently to identify a location and support services to offer a seven day a week shelter in one location to the most vulnerable citizens in a comprehensive and coordinated way. To that end, the work group identified a location in the County which could serve as a single site location for the seven day a week shelter continuously from November through April. The work group submitted a planning application to the County, and while waiting for a decision from the County, community volunteers, churches and the City coordinated to offer five nights of shelter every week and during incidents of extreme bad weather throughout the winter months of 2018-2019.

In 2019 Options for Homeless Residents of Ashland (OHRA) in coordination with the Jackson County Continuum of Care, and with funding from Access, the community action agency of Jackson County, and the City of Ashland, opened the first seven day a week shelter in one location to the most vulnerable citizens in a comprehensive and coordinated way. The shelter ran from November until March (it had to close early due to the pandemic) and provided 45 shelter beds.

In 2020-2021 the City provided OHRA and Maslow Project CARES act and Affordable Housing Trust Funds (under COVID-19 pandemic emergency declarations) to pay for non-congregate emergency sheltering in hotels during the pandemic and for those households displaced by the Alameda Fire. The City of Ashland then applied for and received funding from the State Emergency Solutions Grant fund to open an additional shelter to house up to 49 people in both congregate and non-congregate shelter. OHRA also was able to open the first Project Turnkey funded shelter (no barrier, temporary shelter), which, provided shelter for approximately 35-50 people between 2021 and 2022. When fully operational the OHRA should be able to house up to 74 individuals.

**EMERGENCY SHELTERS:** In addition to the regular OHRA shelter, whenever the temperature is projected to drop below 20 degrees, or severe weather conditions are predicted to occur, the Ashland City Manager authorizes an Emergency Shelter to open in a city-owned facility or utilizing City resources such as staff and funding, if appropriated or otherwise available, to help stand up a shelter, provided there are at least 2 community volunteers available to oversee the shelter. Whenever an Emergency Shelter is called, the City Manager makes a declaration, as soon as there are 2 volunteers who agree to host the shelter, then announcements are put out on the City's website, through a Nixle alert, 211, and signs which posted around town, directing people where to go for shelter. For this activity the City generally relies on donated locations to hold the shelter and community volunteers to staff the shelter. In 2017 and 2018 the City contracted with OHRA to undertake this activity when needed.

**General overview of homeless services that the City provides/supports in Ashland.**

- The City provides funding for both capital improvements and direct services from the City's general fund and from federal and sometimes state grant funding.
- The City dedicates staff time for local and regional planning efforts, and technical support to organizations that provide direct services.
- The City of Ashland is an entitlement jurisdiction for CDBG funds. As a condition of receiving the funding the City is required to identify the needs of homeless families and individuals, describe the nature and extent of homelessness in the community and the region, and identify the need for facilities and services for homeless individuals, as well as the same needs for homeless families with children and other homeless subpopulations. This is done through participation in the annual Point in Time Count and the Homeless Housing Inventory Chart.
- The City also facilitates the development of needed resources that are identified through long-range planning processes as well as emergent needs as they arise.

**Regarding warming and cooling shelters.**

- Ashland does not provide any staffing for direct service but does provide funding or a combination of funding and city facilities from time to time, such as a City owned buildings.
- Since Covid, Comm Dev. staff has been organizing the shelter through coordination with local volunteer groups who work with homeless populations in a volunteer capacity. City staff has also solicited donations of Covid safety supplies, and locations to host the shelters.
- General Funds (AHTF) and a special allocation of CDBG funding to address urgent needs as they arose through an administrative approval process made possible due to the Emergency Declarations. Under normal circumstances, these funding sources would require Council approval and in the case of CDBG a lengthy public hearing/comment process. Under normal circumstances these funding sources would not be able to be allocated quickly enough to address the need for weather related sheltering needs.