

Council votes to contract with Mercy House to operate planned bridge shelters

On Tuesday Feb. 5, the Costa Mesa City Council approved a \$1.45 million annual agreement with Mercy House for professional shelter operator services at both the City's temporary interim and long-term bridge shelters.

"This is another step to restoring the safety and security to families and businesses in Costa Mesa," Mayor Katrina Foley said. "And those families include people who are experiencing homelessness in Costa Mesa."

District 5 Council Member Arlis Reynolds was also in support of contracting with Mercy House to operate the shelter.

"I'm confident we can make this work and I'm really proud of everyone, the staff, council and public who has contributed to this and shaping what can be a robust plan," she said. "The fact that this operator is someone that many members of the community trusts is very important to going forward."

Establishing this bridge shelter option for those experiencing homelessness will provide the additional 50 shelter beds that the City of Costa Mesa is expected to create based on a proposed settlement agreement in the OC Catholic Worker lawsuit.

On Tuesday Jan. 15, the City Council also directed staff to enter into negotiations with the **Lighthouse Church of the Nazarene** to operate a temporary interim bridge shelter on a portion of their property located at 1885 Anaheim Avenue. This would expand what is an already existing inclement weather shelter into a reservation-based, high-security temporary solution to offer shelter beds to those in need.

The City sought operator proposals from Mercy House, Salvation Army and the Illumination Foundation, but it was only Mercy House who submitted a proposal to Costa Mesa.

Established in 1989, Mercy House Mercy House provides housing and comprehensive supportive services to homeless populations and is a long-respected shelter operator. Mercy House currently operates the county's Bridges at Kraemer shelter that has a similar security and reservation-based model.

Mercy House operators will work in tandem with the city's existing community outreach staff members to manage the shelter on a 24-hour basis.