



**Update on Sheltering Homeless as of February 14**

Council,

I have been coordinating with the Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management. Whatcom County Health Department and EMS administration on acting upon the Council resolution from last Tuesday. We will continue to work closely with those departments, the City of Bellingham and our community partners to connect those in our community who are unsheltered to facilities during this cold weather period. There is still space available for those that are in need of shelter.

Here is our latest report as it relates to shelter capacity as of last night;

| <b>Shelter</b>              | <b>Total Bed Capacity</b> | <b>Usage – 2/13</b> | <b>Unused Bed Capacity</b> |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Lighthouse Mission/Fountain | 210                       | 182                 | 28                         |
| COB - Maritime              | 20-25                     | 6                   | 14-19*                     |
|                             | 230                       | 188                 | 42**                       |

\*Men Only

\*\*According to a discussions with Jim Peterson, HomesNOW! has 25-30 people at the church

Additional information and resources is below;

**Community Shelter Opportunities and Resources**

- Lighthouse Mission Ministries (LMM) reports that they had 182 guests between the Fountain Community Church and LMM facilities. Their overall capacity is 210.
- City of Bellingham Emergency Shelter at Maritime Heritage Park pavilion reports that they had 6 guests. The overall capacity at Maritime is 20 spaces for men only.
- The City of Bellingham continues to have a room in the central library available during the day for women staying in the night shelter at Fountain Community Church.
- Opportunity Council continues to provide resources and vouchers to families in need (only for families at this time).
- HomesNOW! has confirmed that the church at which they are currently located will provide shelter space for tonight, Thursday, February 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - Homes NOW! Indicated that the church they are at provided shelter space

for 26 guests on Wednesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

- In discussions with Jim Peterson, of the 26 guests at the HomesNOW! shelter;
  - 2 guests are a family and HomesNow! has been asked to refer that family to the Opportunity Council's family housing program.
  - 16 are males that can utilize the emergency shelter at the City of Bellingham's Maritime Heritage Park.
  - Continued work to refer or find locations for approximately 8 guests.
- Whatcom County has approached the City of Bellingham on the permitting requirements to utilize the Garden Level Conference Room at the Civic Center for shelter space
  - <https://bellingham.municipal.codes/BMC/20.15.030>, requirements.
- The City of Bellingham Emergency Management has coordinated with the Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management to assist with the request for volunteer support for the emergency shelter at Maritime Park.
- The Sheriff's Office Division of Emergency Management has sent out a request to the Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) list serve to see if there are facilities available and willing to provide HomesNow! shelter space in the next few days.
  - As of last night there is a potential facility that is reaching out to HomesNOW!
  - Temporary accommodations for homeless individuals and families located within a church building and accessory in nature to the primary religious use of the church building are not required to comply with permitting rules or obtain a temporary permit.

Deputy Executive Schroeder and I, along with many team members within Whatcom County Government, have been working diligently to provide access to shelter for those in need in the community, along with promoting the goals of the resolution passed last Tuesday evening. Looking at information concerning occupancy, it appears we have capacity within the shelter systems. The important work left is to connect those that may yet need shelter to the facilities that are operating.

Once again, I'd like to thank all of the community organizations for their role in providing safe warm shelter during this time of cold weather.

Sincerely,

Jack Louws  
County Executive