A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY AND THE MAYOR JOINTLY REQUESTING FOUR MILLION DOLLARS OF THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE FOR CONTINUED LOW BARRIER, YEAR ROUND SHELTER OPERATIONS.

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage recognizes the pressing need for year-round low-barrier shelter services to address homelessness in our community; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality also recognizes that the solution to homelessness is increasing available housing in the community, as well as increasing access to services for people who need additional supports such as treatment, behavioral health services, vocational rehabilitation and training, and workforce development opportunities, in order to become independent in the long term; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality continues to pursue strategies to increase housing production, reduce costs of development, improve housing attainability and affordability, prevent people from entering homelessness, and other work to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness, but these efforts take time to produce results, and there will continue to be a need for emergency shelter; and

WHEREAS, the former Solid Waste Services Administration Building at 1111 E 56th Avenue in Midtown Anchorage ("E. 56 Ave. Shelter") has been identified as a suitable location for emergency cold weather shelter and was activated on October 10, 2023 and is currently slated to run until April 30, 2024; and

WHEREAS, through an agreement with Solid Waste Services, the building the E. 56th Ave. Shelter is located in, is available for this use until Summer 2026 or later; and

WHEREAS, the current operating contract from October 15-April 30 is projected to cost nearly $4.1 $3.94 Million dollars and is currently funded by alcohol tax, re-appropriated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, and some general government funds; and

WHEREAS, the E. 56th Ave. Shelter is available to be used as a year-round low-barrier shelter and based on the shelter location criteria of the Municipality has been identified as a suitable location to offer year-round low-barrier shelter; and

WHEREAS, operating the E. 56th Ave. Shelter on a year-round basis would also follow the Municipality’s policy of not concentrating services for people experiencing homelessness in one part of town; and
WHEREAS, the E. 56th Ave. Shelter has demonstrated success during emergency cold weather season in providing housing-focused services, maintaining a well-run and well-staffed environment, and minimizing impacts on surrounding neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, the shelter’s current maximum capacity ranging between 150-200 of 200 clients, aligns with the Municipality’s goal to offer effective and manageable support to those in need while maintaining a housing focused approach to rapidly move clients from shelter to housing with supports; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality acknowledges the importance of securing funding to sustain and enhance the operations of this vital shelter year round; and

WHEREAS, the costs associated with running the E. 56th Ave. Shelter from May 1 until October 15 are nearly $3.5 million dollars for operations, bringing the annual cost to run this facility to $7.3 million.

NOW THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY AND MAYOR RESOLVE:

Section 1: The Anchorage Assembly and Mayor jointly request $4 million in funding from the Alaska State Legislature for Fiscal Year 2025 to support the emergency shelter housing focused operations of the year-round low-barrier shelter at the former Solid Waste Services Administration Building located at 1111 E 56th Avenue in Midtown Anchorage during the summer season, to match the Municipality’s funding commitment for emergency cold weather shelter operations.

Section 2: The E. 56th Ave. Shelter has proven to be a successful model with minimal impacts on surrounding neighborhoods. The Municipality believes that the shelter’s strategic location and manageable size contribute to its effectiveness in addressing homelessness in our community and is necessary to maintain year round.

Section 2[3]: The Municipality commits to appropriating a 100% operating funding match for the requested $4 million from the Alaska State Legislature to further demonstrate its dedication to the success and sustainability of year-round operations of the E. 56th Ave. Shelter.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 23rd day of January, 2024.

____________________________
Christopher Constant
Chair

____________________________
Municipal Clerk