

Homeless shelter hinges on Covid-19 relief grant

■ County, nonprofit group working on plan for facility that would house 125 people possibly in Port

By DAN BENSON
Ozaukee Press staff

Ozaukee County could have a permanent homeless shelter near the Justice Center in Port Washington if a state grant is awarded.

The county Health and Human Services Committee last week approved an "intent to apply" proposal for a grant for up to \$1.34 million to develop the shelter.

The funding would be in the form of a state Community Development Block Grant through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Family Promise of Ozaukee County Inc., a private nonprofit organization, is seeking the funds to develop an emergency shelter to replace the current system that until coronavirus struck used local churches to provide shelter and meals for homeless individuals and families.

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When the pandemic struck, however, churches closed, leaving Family Promise with no place to shelter people overnight, even as the number of people seeking shelter increased.

Family Promise found other shelter but at a higher cost, officials said, sometimes spending up to \$15,000 in a month for motel rooms.

The intent-to-apply application describes the proposed project.

If invited to apply, "chances are good" the grant application will be awarded in February, officials said.

Three locations are being eyed for the shelter, with the preferred site being the 5,000-square-foot former daycare center near the Ozaukee County Justice Center at the corner of Highway LL and Sunset Road in the City of Port Washington.

The shelter cost is projected to be \$1.34 million and would serve 50 households, or 125 people.

About \$885,000 would go toward site acquisition and building renovation, \$300,000 toward operations and \$154,050 for administration.

The grant would be awarded to the county, which would pass the funds onto Family Promise.

The county would be required to administer the grant for two years. After that it would have no involvement in the shelter.

After seven years, Family Promise would own the property outright.