

Corvallis approves first microshelters

JAMES DAY

Corvallis Gazette-Times

Microshelters for the homeless are on their way to approval in Corvallis.

City Manager Mark Shepard announced Monday that he has approved the first 30-day permit for shelters at the Corvallis Evangelical Church on Northwest Kings Boulevard.

Shepard, who made the announcement at a virtual City Council meeting at the downtown fire station, said that the First United Methodist Church also has submitted an application for a permit.

City Council approval is required to extend the permits to 90 days, and Shepard said that it was likely that councilors will be acting on multiple requests for extended permits at the April 20 council session.

Although issues involving the coronavirus outbreak dominated the 80-minute session conducted via video, it was the homeless piece that drew the most discussion.

Shepard said that the move "is in response to the crisis we have now and not to solve the homeless problem."

The city also is working with churches that want to receive ap-

proval as temporary shelters for the homeless. Shepard said the key piece to that process is a safety inspection, with city staff still working on the protocols.

Councilors expressed concerns about the closure of public restrooms in city facilities, which was reported in Sunday's Gazette-Times/Democrat-Herald. Porta-potties have been installed at all city facilities that had permanent ones, Shepard confirmed, because the city does not have enough staff with personal protective equipment to clean the facilities.

The contractor who provided the porta-potties also is responsible for their cleaning.

Community members have volunteered to add hand-washing stations to the porta-potty sites and Shepard said "we are facilitating that."

Shepard also said that the city is not posting removal notices at homeless campsites at this time. The city also is collaborating with the men's cold weather shelter on Southeast Chapman Place to make sure the tents behind their facility are being safely supervised.

Councilors also asked Shepard about how much city funding might



JAMES DAY, CORVALLIS GAZETTE-TIMES

Corvallis Mayor Biff Traber, left, conducted Monday's City Council session via video conference, with City Recorder Carla Holzworth, center, and City Manager Mark Shepard on hand in the downtown fire station meeting room.

be available to assist with coronavirus outbreak issues. Shepard noted that there is about \$40,000 in the mayor/council budget and another \$640,000 in the general fund contingencies fund.

"The City Council could direct those funds as they see fit," said Shepard, who added that he preferred all such funding requests be aligned with the needs of the city/county emergency operations center and the work of the Benton County Health Department.

The emerging operations center still plans to move from the Corvallis Fire Department training center to larger quarters in a newly purchased county building on Southwest Research Way. However, the move has been delayed a week because of logistical issues.

The video setup allowed for video of councilors or staffers to pop up on the two screens at the fire station when they had a comment to make or a question to pose. Paul Shaffer (Ward 7) and Nancy

THURSDAY'S BRIEFING

Corvallis City Manager Mark Shepard will be on hand at noon Thursday at the downtown fire station, 400 NW Harrison Blvd. for a virtual briefing on the coronavirus outbreak and the actions of the emergency operations center the city and Benton County are running. Shepard said Monday he plans to offer such briefings WEEKLY at least through the end of the month.

Wyse (Ward 6) were not able to link up with the video and they participated via speaker phone. Hyatt Lytle of Ward 3 was on screen successfully, but her audio feed did not work and she was forced to do a "thumbs up or thumbs down" on measures that required a council vote.

Contact reporter James Day at jim.day@gazettetimes.com or 541-812-6116. Follow at Twitter.com/jameshday or gazettetimes.com/blogs/jim-day.

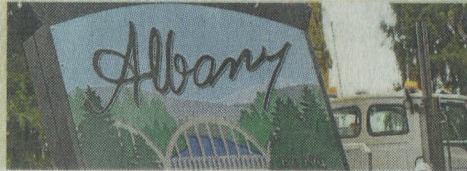


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Third resident dies

Veterans' home in Lebanon announces new COVID-19 death

KYLE ODEGARD
Albany Democrat-Herald

A third resident of the Edward C. Allworth Veterans' Home in Lebanon has passed away due to COVID-19, the illness caused by the novel coronavirus, the facility announced on its Facebook page

The death occurred late Friday night, according to the Facebook post.

The resident had tested positive for COVID-19 on March 22 and had other underlying medical conditions, the post states.

Two more cases of COVID-19 also were confirmed at the veterans' home on Friday, according to the Facebook post.

Those are the only active cases of COVID-19 at the facility.

So far, the Edward C. Allworth

18 positive cases, with three deaths.

Friday's death at the veterans' home was not reflected in reports released by the Oregon Health Authority on Saturday or Sunday. As of Monday evening, the OHA website did not reflect the third death at the facility.

All of Linn County's COVID-19 deaths have been at the Edward C. Allworth Veterans' Home.

Meanwhile, the statewide death toll from COVID-19 continues to

OHA announced two more fatalities on Monday, bringing the official total to 29.

One of the two fatalities reported by the OHA was a 93-year-old Washington County man who died on Saturday at Providence St. Vincent Medical Center, while the other was a 70-year-old Marion County woman who died at her home on Thursday. Both had underlying health conditions, according to the state agency.

OHA announced 64 new cases

ton County and one in Linn. Benton County has now had 21 people test positive for COVID-19 and one death from the disease, while Linn County has had 44 cases and three deaths.

Statewide, 1,132 people have tested positive for COVID-19 since the coronavirus pandemic began.

"It is with heavy hearts that we make both of these announcements," said Oregon Department