

Agenda Item Report



Winnebago County
The Wave of the Future

DATE: 10/23/2023
FROM: Winnebago County Executive's Office
RE: St Vincent de Paul Neenah/Menasha Building Renovation/Expansion Request for \$1,076,000

General Description:

St Vincent de Paul of Neenah/Menasha has purchased the 27,000 sq ft space adjoining the current facility to make the pantry larger and more convenient for customers

Action Requested:

Direction to draft a resolution releasing a single grant issued to St Vincent de Paul of Neenah/Menasha for use in funding the renovation/expansion of the food pantry, walk-in freezers, and storage space.

Procedural Steps:

Committee of Jurisdiction: ARPA Strategy & Outcomes Commission Meeting date: 11/07/2023

Background:

Feeding America Eastern WI shows food insecurity rates around 7.5% in Winnebago with Menasha school district and Neenah school district students on free and reduced lunch at 57.8% and 34.7% respectively. Feeding America has also identified a need for a food pantry in the Neenah area, which is in direct correlation with the "Health and Human Services" initiative and the "Quality of Life" and "Emergency Response" Projects of the SPIRIT Funds. Currently residing in a small corner of the store, the organization has not been able to meet the full and increasing community needs they see. The layout only allows seven people in the pantry at a time. As people come to the pantry, they're forced to wait in the retail part of the store, which causes feelings of "otherness" and wears down a person's sense of dignity, something they want to build up, not tear down.

The organization has also run into storage issues. Current building and shelf capacity limits what kinds of food and how much of product can be accepted and distributed. The organization doesn't have the ability to take in and store fresh fruit and vegetables. Currently, they have one, standard size house freezer, which is incapable of taking in and storing meat, dairy, and other frozen products. The organization wants to encourage healthy choices, something all people should have the right to, not just those who can afford it.

Recently, the organization was able to purchase a larger, adjoining space (27,000 sq ft) to St Vincent de Paul Neenah Menasha to make the pantry larger and have a private entrance, but still needs to get the space up and running. With SPIRIT funds, they plan to 1) purchase walk-in freezer and increase storage capacity to allow them to accept all food and hygiene products; 2) expand the ability to take in more families at once to address food insecurity in the community; 3) build up families' resiliency and; 4) increase the availability of volunteer hours for community members to give back to their community.

Policy Discussion:

The commission has identified food insecurity and hunger as direct results of the Covid 19 pandemic and ensuing economic impact throughout the county. By granting funds between the discussed amounts of

\$250,000 to \$500,000, St Vincent de Paul will be able to devote greater resources and time toward acquiring food and serving the community. The total project cost is \$1,076,000.
\$269,000 = 25% \$538,000 = 50% \$807,000 = 75%

Attachments:

Spirit Fund Application Response