

Portland Business Journal

City to kick in \$2.7M more to fund 'housing emergency' programs

By Jon Bell

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The housing emergency declared by the Portland City Council last fall is going to cost the city at least \$2.7 million more than originally budgeted for this year.

At its meeting on Wednesday, the council will consider a budget amendment that would authorize an additional \$2.75 million for the current fiscal year to help fund various shelter services, property purchases, short-term rent assistance and other programs.

According to city budget information, the \$1.1 million in contingency funds currently available to fund some of the programs is not enough for the current fiscal year. As a result, the council will decide whether or not an additional \$2.75 million should be directed toward the housing emergency services.

The funding would come from two sources, the first being a \$1.6 million settlement that the city received from online travel companies in regard to hotel and motel taxes collected between 1999 and 2015. The second source is about \$1.1 million that would come from the Portland Development Commission by way of a \$12.5 million cash payment PDC received from General Growth Properties, the owner of Pioneer Place.

GGP made that payment as part of an agreement with PDC that released the mall owner from future payment obligations.

If the council approves the budget amendment, \$1 million would go to the Portland Housing Bureau to provide short-term rent assistance. Another \$700,000 would help fund the Sears Shelter and the Menashe Peace Shelter, two temporary shelters that have been operating for a few months.

Funding would also support a temporary property broker, fencing, trash and toilets for a camp that has emerged on a city-owned property on North Kerby Avenue and daytime storage facilities, among other services.