

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS, RECOVERY, AND RESILIENCY INITIATIVE

BACKGROUND:

As the City progresses through the COVID-19 pandemic it is important to acknowledge and understand the toll that it has taken on the mental health wellness of our residents. Recognizing this important issue, Mayor Haila has suggested to the staff that this would be an opportune time for the City to help in raising awareness of this very important topic since May is National Mental Health Awareness Month.

In response to the Mayor's request, a small group of City staff has had preliminary discussions about developing a mental health wellness, recovery, and resiliency initiative. Since the purpose of National Mental Health Awareness Month is to raise awareness of trauma and the impact it can have on the physical, emotional, and mental well-being of children, families, and communities; staff envisions providing opportunities involving education, training, and resource information to the general public.

The initiative would span over the next several months with the first event occurring in mid-May and the final event in September coinciding with the annual Mental Health Expo and National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month. The initiative would include partnerships with Iowa State University, Ames and Gilbert Community School Districts, and local mental health and disability agencies.

The City Council is being asked to appropriate up to \$5,000 from Council Contingency to help cover the costs associated with education and training offerings (workbooks, trainer fees, printing, advertising, supplies etc).

The initiative will include four parts: 1) Introduction to the issue through a Public Forum/Round Table discussion by subject experts, 2) Mental Health First Aide training which provides skills to identify mental health signs and symptoms as well as tools to support individuals experiencing these problems, and 3) Suicide Prevention training, and 4) Resource and Information distribution which will be offered throughout the first three of the parts of the initiative.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. a. Direct staff to develop an initiative supporting Mental Health Wellness, Recovery, and Resiliency offering education, training, and resource opportunities to the public.

- b. Approve up to \$5,000 in Council Contingency funds to help cover the costs associated with this initiative. However, this amount might have to be increased should there be more public interest than we are currently expecting.
- 2. Direct staff to develop an initiative supporting Mental Health Wellness, Recovery, and Resiliency with modifications.
- 3. Do not pursue this initiative at this time.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Research has shown that the mental health impact of disasters typically outlasts the physical impact, suggesting that today's mental health needs will continue well beyond the COVID-19 outbreak itself. In an effort to acknowledge and address the mental health needs in the community, the Mental Health Wellness, Recovery, and Resiliency Initiative suggested by the Mayor will serve as a conduit with connecting people to education, training, and resource information.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative No. 1, thereby directing City staff to develop a Mental Health Wellness, Recovery, and Resiliency Initiative for the public and appropriating up to \$5,000 in Council Contingency funds.