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Orinda joins other Contra Costa County cities in declaring a shelter emergency

By *Sora O'Doherty*

At the urging of former Orinda city council member California Sen. Steve Glazer, Orinda adopted a resolution declaring a shelter crisis in Contra Costa County at its Nov. 13 meeting. The adoption of the resolution was required in order for the county and cities within the county to receive grant funding from the Homeless Emergency Aid Program. The State of California Homeless Coordination and Financing Council announced the availability of \$500 million in HEAP grant funding Sept. 5. The resolution was adopted without discussion as part of the council's consent calendar.

In 2017, according to the county, 10 clients from Orinda received services such as meals, food pantry items, clothing, showers, laundry services, emergency supplies, transportation, case management services, rehabilitation services, veteran's rapid rehousing services, housing eligibility and vulnerability assessment services, emergency shelter, warming center shelter and street outreach services. Of the 10 Orinda clients, one was a veteran and five were seniors over the age of 60.

The county is in a position to increase its funding for homeless emergency services by over \$7 million with the HEAP money. In order to receive funding in the first round, applicants must apply by the end of this year. Half of the money must be obligated by Jan. 1, 2020, and all of the funds must be spent by June 30, 2021.

Included in the background material for the resolution was a table of current year homelessness data for the county, broken down by municipalities. Orinda was at one, as was Discovery Bay. Nine municipalities, including Moraga, were at zero, while Lafayette was at six. Cities with high homelessness included Antioch at 350 and Concord at 252. Martinez, Richmond and Pittsburg were over 100, and the rest were between seven and 100. The total was 1,352. The data for 2017 of individuals homeless for at least a year totaled 2,680 for the county, including six for Orinda.

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