

Supervisors to vote on allocating funds to crisis nursery

By Anne Ternus-Bellamy

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Yolo County supervisors will consider allocating funds to help save the Yolo Crisis Nursery when the board meets on Tuesday morning.

County staff is recommending that supervisors approve \$40,000 on Tuesday and commit to holding another \$40,000 in contingency, dependent on finding a new host agency to operate the crisis nursery. The nursery provides emergency overnight and day care to children from birth through age 5 whose parents are in crisis.

The \$80,000 commitment would represent half of the county's unallocated Pomona Funds for fiscal year 2014-15. Those funds come from the county's share of a \$206 billion tobacco settlement reached between 46 states and five major cigarette manufacturers in 1998.

California will receive \$25 billion in settlement funds through 2025 and Yolo County receives \$330,000 annually, which can be spent by supervisors for any purpose. The board already has allocated \$170,000 in Pomona Funds for next year.

Last fall, supervisors established guidelines for use of Pomona Funds, with priorities given to programs that enhance and sustain the safety net, are utilized for one-time or short-term expenditures and can be leveraged as seed money or for matching grants.

Allocating Pomona Funds to the Yolo Crisis Nursery would meet those guidelines, county staff noted.

The crisis nursery, located in a residential neighborhood in Davis, served 265 Yolo County children in 2013, providing emergency overnight care, emergency day care, respite care for foster parents, supervised visitation, case management for parents by a licensed social worker and more.

The nursery has been credited with saving hundreds of children from abuse or neglect during its 13-year history — abuse or neglect that parents themselves have said likely would have occurred had they not had a safe place to bring their children.

But EMQ FamiliesFirst, which operates the nursery, announced in March that it would cease to do so effective June 30.

The cost of running the nursery — more than \$600,000 a year under EMQ’s management — as well as fallout from issues at FamiliesFirst’s other Davis facility — a group home on Fifth Street for troubled youths that has since been shuttered — prompted the decision.

Since then, the Friends of the Yolo Crisis Nursery have mounted a multi-pronged effort to save the nursery, including an ongoing fundraising campaign and a search for a new host agency to operate the nursery.

The Friends believe the nursery can be operated on a budget of about \$408,000 for fiscal year 2014-15 and have committed to raising \$100,000 through the current “One Child, One Day” campaign and another \$150,000 in grants. That projected revenue, on top of \$81,000 in income from existing contracts and fees, would leave the nursery approximately \$77,000 in the red.

That’s where the \$80,000 in Pomona Funds would come in.

Supervisors signaled their willingness to allocate the funds at a meeting last month, directing staff to return with a plan to do so at Tuesday’s meeting.

Supervisors also plan further discussion on how Pomona Funds are allocated in the future.

The board meeting gets underway at 9 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors’ chambers in the County Administration Building, 625 Court St. in Woodland.

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