

First, I want to say thank you to the Mayor, to the Council, and to all the rest of the city employees and city residents who have made this project possible for the last year. One woman, Sharon Lewis, couldn't make it today because she is at work at Walmart. She told her story to the Providence Journal last spring—at 75, she suddenly found her self homeless for the first time, sleeping on a park bench in Memorial Park after her shifts at Walmart, until she found her way to the shelter. We should all be proud of the ways we have helped other Woonsocket residents with this program.

We were very sad to have to announce that the shelter is closing to all our staff and residents last Friday, and we are very worried about many of them who are elderly, disabled, or sick and who we may not be able to find beds for.

Last Friday, after reading the lease that the City has posted and which we unfortunately cannot sign, we sent an alternate version of that lease for the Council to consider. Due to the Council's decision to potentially spend \$75,000 of opiate settlement dollars to make this project work, I believe that there is a solution on the table that could work for everyone.

Solicitor, as this proposal was mailed to the whole council, is it a public document? I have left copies here for anyone to read if they would like along with the memo we also sent.

I first want to say, I absolutely agree the state should put more money into this shelter. All our shelters are struggling after budget cuts year last year and need more funding. However, the lease we proposed is doable with the money we have available to us and would still provide close to \$100,000 in surplus revenue for the city to apply to the overall city budget. It seems like a win win.

I know there is some concern that the State needs to put more money into the project, that we should be able to cover even more costs, or that we

just have enough money to make this work if we want to. I wish those were true. Unfortunately, it is not.

Last year, the Council and the Mayor did an amazing job at negotiating this with the State, bringing in around \$200,000 in additional funds that were invested in the City overall in capital improvements and funds that went into the city budget. The state has told us that that extra money, which was part of the Covid stimulus, is no longer available. If the Council passes the lease that was proposed on the agenda initially, and nothing changes, we will be closed by October 1st.

There are some real complexities here. For example, we have around \$100,000 we would like to invest into the building available to us in Federal funds. I do not understand why the Council's proposed lease doesn't make use of that, and those funds will be lost to the city if the proposed lease goes forward.

OpenDoors is very willing to keep trying until it is completely impossible. Due to tight timelines, I think tomorrow will be too late to try to find a new compromise, but I will not stop holding out hope.

I am happy to answer any questions you have.