



TO: The Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Michael C. Van Milligen, City Manager

SUBJECT: City Council Priority - Dream Center

DATE: February 25, 2020

In August 2019, at the annual goal setting process, the Mayor and City Council selected the Dream Center as a Top Priority. City staff has met with Dubuque Dream Center Executive Director Robert Kimble to learn about any barriers they have to continued success. One of the most significant barriers was operational funding. In the Fiscal Year 2021 Economic Development budget, there is a recommendation to provide \$40,000 per year for the next two years to provide operational support to the Dream Center. Robert identified a capital improvement project that could be made at their facility at 1600 White Street that generates significant operational funding.

Robert described that in routine delivery of services to the almost 200 families who are engaged in "In Your Life Mentoring," the legal definition of childcare services are met, qualifying the Dream Center families for State of Iowa childcare financial assistance. They have many clients who could do direct pay for the services, with the potential for up to \$800,000 per year in annual operating funding.

The obstacle to the Dream Center receiving this money is their facility does not meet the State of Iowa childcare guidelines and they do not have adequate green space to meet the guidelines.

The Dream Center has identified a \$636,000 capital improvement project to be done over the next two years that would lead to the Dream Center qualifying for this up to \$800,000 a year in operating revenues from childcare services. The Dream Center has identified \$360,000 in resources to do this project (Attachment #1) leaving them \$276,000 short of full funding.

The Mayor and City Council has budgeted \$200,000 a year beginning in the current fiscal year (FY2020) to assist downtown non-profits with building renovations related to Americans with Disability (ADA) improvements and for weatherization, alternative energy and energy efficiencies.

The improvements needed to their existing facility and the creation of green space meets the general intent of the funding and certainly meets the City Council priority.

This project will fit the City's neighborhood reinvestment and workforce development goals.

I respectfully recommend that the Mayor and City Council dedicate \$176,000 in Fiscal Year 2020 and \$100,000 in Fiscal Year 2021 of this already budgeted funding to the Dream Center project.



Michael C. Van Milligen

MCVM:jh

Attachment

cc: Robert Kimble, Dubuque Dream Center Executive Director
Crenna Brumwell, City Attorney
Teri Goodmann, Assistant City Manager
Cori Burbach, Assistant City Manager
Jill Connors, Economic Development