



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

City of Bellingham

And

Local 1937

Guild of Pacific Northwest Employees

Establishment of a Temporary City-Run Shower Program

- I. **PURPOSE:** The Memorandum of Understanding memorializes the mutual agreement between the parties regarding the City's use of an outside entity to operate a free shower program. Creating an alternative to the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center's (AHAC) shower program is intended to address public health and safety concerns, support our community's aquatic recreation needs, and continue our City's compassionate response by providing basic hygiene needs in a community where few such services are currently available.
- II. **SCOPE:** This agreement covers the free shower program established by the City.
- III. **AGREEMENT:**

WHEREAS, prior to COVID, community members had the ability to shower at the AHAC for a fee of \$3.00, and other agencies, such as the YMCA, also offered community showers;

WHEREAS, staff covered under the Local 1937 collective bargaining agreement employed at AHAC administered and monitored the shower program;

WHEREAS, during the community shut down due to COVID, the Whatcom County Health Department requested that the City run a free shower program in the Civic Complex locker room staffed by existing AHAC employees to provide showers to houseless individuals, since showers were no longer available due to the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the City determined that when AHAC reopened to the public following the COVID shutdown, we would continue to provide a free shower program to support the basic needs of the most vulnerable members of our community;

WHEREAS, the City has experienced an increase in the number of homeless individuals in Bellingham in need of basic hygiene services such as showers;

WHEREAS, the City has been working for several months to identify an alternative to the free shower program that has been available at the aquatic center, initiated at the request of health officials during the COVID-19 emergency;

WHEREAS, after a planned three-week aquatic center maintenance closure (July 29-Aug. 20, 2023), all AHAC users are welcome to pay to use the facility for a variety of aquatic programs, but free showers are no longer available;

WHEREAS, the City issued an RFP to find a partner to run a new shower program on an interim basis, to help fill a gap in this service need prior to The Way Station being operational in summer 2024.

NOW, THEREFORE, the parties agree that:

- As of August 20, 2023, the City has discontinued the free shower program at AHAC;
- The City purchased a mobile shower trailer which will be located behind City Hall;
- The City issued an RFP for a shower program operator;
- The Opportunity Council submitted a response to the RFP and is estimated to begin operating the shower program in November of 2023;
- City employees will perform maintenance on the shower trailer as needed. Emergency circumstances or maintenance needs beyond the capabilities of city employees will be contracted out.
- City employees will launder towels used in the free shower program.
- The free shower program may be curtailed at any time based on the needs of the community as determined by the City.

EXECUTED, this 12th day of Oct, 2023 for Local 1937:


Jael Komac, President
Local 1937


Dean Tharp, Staff Representative
Guild of Pacific Northwest Employees

DATED this 2 day of November, 2023 for the **CITY OF BELLINGHAM:**



Mayor

ATTEST: 

Finance Director



Human Resources Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Office of the City Attorney