COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
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CLERK OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: **January 29, 2019**

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT
COUNTY PROPERTY FOR TEMPORARY USE (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW
The U.S. – Mexico border has seen a surge in Central American migrants seeking asylum from humanitarian abuse, often stemming from gang recruitment and violence from countries with some of the highest murder rates in the world. A majority of these asylum seekers are families, many who have traveled long distances with small children.

On October 25, 2018, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency abruptly ended a program known as "Safe Release", which helped families requesting asylum at the U.S. - Mexico border connect with family members residing in the United States. Under the "Safe Release" program, ICE supported asylum seeking families by ensuring they had travel plans in place prior to their release.

By the next day, ICE began implementing a new procedural change which did not give families enough time to make plans or book travel before their release. Under this new expedited procedure, after being screened to ensure they posed no security threat, asylum seeking families were still given permission to stay in the U.S. legally as they await the outcome of their application, but were quickly released into San Diego without any coordinated plans to reach their destination city. As a result, a crisis emerged where anywhere from 60 to 180 individuals in family units were being released nightly into our communities without a place to go to make their travel arrangements.

The San Diego Rapid Response Network (SDRRN), comprised of more than two-dozen non-profit organizations, then established a temporary shelter to ensure families had access to food, medical care, legal services and assistance with making travel arrangements to reach their final destination. The average local stay for migrant families is twenty-four to forty-eight hours. SDRRN is currently trying to coordinate with ICE to drop off these families at the temporary shelter every day; however, the current shelter has at times been over capacity, creating an urgent need to identify additional locations for the State or an appropriate entity to continue providing

temporary shelter. To add to the pressure, Jewish Family Service, the lead operator of the shelter, was given notice that they need to vacate the current location by February 15, 2019. If adequate shelter space is not identified swiftly, migrant families may have no choice but to seek accommodations at homeless shelters or on our streets.

On January 8, 2019, the Board of Supervisors took a series of actions to help address the migrant shelter crisis including directing the Chief Administrative Officer to identify County property for a potential temporary shelter that the State or another entity could use to shelter these legal asylum seeking families and to bring back any identified properties or recommendations to the Board for action. More than twenty properties were identified by the Chief Administrative Officer, of which six were visited. From the six, only one was identified as a viable option.

Today's request asks the Board to authorize the Director, Department of General Services to enter into a lease agreement with Jewish Family Service of San Diego to temporarily use a County property scheduled for demolition and redevelopment as affordable housing to shelter these legal asylum seeking families on a time-limited basis, no longer than December 31, 2019, and to ensure that the County incurs no costs with the temporary arrangement.

RECOMMENDATION(S)
VICE-CHAIRMAN GREG COX AND SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER

1) Find that the proposed project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines sections 15269(c).

2) Pursuant to Government Code section 26227, approve and authorize the Director, Department of General Services, to execute the lease agreement for the property at 1501 and 1555 Sixth Avenue, San Diego, California with Jewish Family Service of San Diego that includes the following terms:
    a. The lease term will end no later than December 31, 2019;
    b. Jewish Family Service will make a one-time lease payment of one dollar to the County;
    c. Jewish Family Service will reimburse the County for all County-incurred costs to open and maintain the leased premises; and
    d. Jewish Family Service will pay for all ongoing operation and maintenance costs to operate the leased premises.

3) Authorize the Director, Department of General Services, to take any future actions to administer the lease.

FISCAL IMPACT
There is no fiscal impact associated with today's actions. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years. Jewish Family Service of San Diego will incur or reimburse all start up and ongoing costs associated with use of this property during the short time period up to December 31, 2019.

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BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT
N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT
N/A

BACKGROUND
The U.S. – Mexico border has seen a surge in Central American migrants seeking asylum from humanitarian abuse, often stemming from gang recruitment and violence from countries with some of the highest murder rates in the world. A majority of these asylum seekers are families, many who have traveled long distances with small children.

Due to this significant increase, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency has seen a backlog in the number of applicants they are able to process. To make room for additional asylum seekers, ICE has been releasing asylum seeking families and giving them permission to stay in the U.S. legally as they await the outcome of their applications.

On October 25, 2018, ICE abruptly ended a program known as "Safe Release", which helped families requesting asylum at the U.S. - Mexico border connect with family members residing in the United States. Under the "Safe Release" program, ICE supported asylum seeking families by ensuring they had travel plans in place prior to their release.

By the next day, ICE began implementing this new procedural change which did not give families enough time to make plans or book travel before their release. Under this new expedited procedure, after being screened to ensure they pose no security threat, asylum seeking families were quickly released onto San Diego streets without any coordinated plans to reach their destination city where they would have an ICE hearing. As a result, a crisis emerged where anywhere from 60 to 180 individuals in family units were being released nightly into our communities without a place to go to make their travel arrangements.

The San Diego Rapid Response Network (SDRRN), comprised of more than two-dozen non-profit organizations, then established a temporary shelter to ensure families had access to food, medical care, legal services and assistance with making travel arrangements to reach their final destination. The average local stay for migrant families is twenty-four to forty-eight hours. SDRRN is currently trying to coordinate with ICE to drop off these families at the temporary shelter every day; however, the current shelter has at times been over capacity, creating an urgent need to identify additional locations for the State or an appropriate entity to continue providing temporary shelter. To add to the pressure, Jewish Family Service, the lead operator of the shelter, was given notice that they need to vacate the current location by February 15, 2019. If adequate shelter space is not identified swiftly, migrant families may have no choice but to seek accommodations at homeless shelters or on our streets.

On January 8, 2019, the Board of Supervisors took a series of actions to help address the migrant shelter crisis including directing the Chief Administrative Officer to identify County property for a potential temporary shelter that the State or another entity could use to shelter these legal asylum seeking families and to bring back any identified properties or recommendations to the

Board for action. More than twenty properties were identified by the Chief Administrative Officer, of which six were visited. From the six, only one was identified as a viable option.

Today's request asks the Board to authorize the Director, Department of General Services to enter into a lease agreement with Jewish Family Service of San Diego to temporarily use a County property scheduled for demolition and redevelopment as affordable housing. If approved, this property would be used to shelter these legal asylum seeking families on a time-limited basis, no longer than December 31, 2019, and have no negative impact on the proposed development's construction schedule. Additionally, the County will incur no costs with this temporary arrangement.

Pursuant to the lease, Jewish Family Service will provide temporary shelter, access to food, medical care, legal services, and assistance with travel arrangements for asylum-seekers released in San Diego County by federal immigration officials. The lease is also in furtherance of the objectives of the Migrant Crisis Working Group, and is necessary to meet the social needs of the County population, including but not limited to, health, safety, welfare, legal services, and the like. The lease supports services that will help ensure that those migrants and families seeking asylum do not seek accommodations on the streets or at homeless shelters, which would place an undue burden on already-stressed homeless providers. Providing access to food and medical care will also help prevent the spread of disease and address public health concerns.

The fastest growing portion of migrants consists of parents arriving with children. While families await their application decision, it is imperative to provide safe shelter with supportive services to ensure the wellbeing of these vulnerable populations and the surrounding communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

The proposed lease is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Article 18, Section 15269(c) of the CEQA Guidelines, as it involves specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. This lease will allow Jewish Family Service to provide temporary shelter, access to food, medical care, legal services, and assistance with travel arrangements for asylum-seekers released in the County by federal immigration officials. The provision of these services will help ensure that those seeking asylum do not seek accommodations on the streets or at homeless shelters, which would place an undue burden on already-stressed homeless providers. Providing access to food and medical care will also help prevent the spread of disease and address public health concerns. Today's action is therefore statutorily exempt from CEQA because it involves taking action necessary to prevent both a housing and public health emergency that the County may otherwise face as a result of the influx of asylum seekers being released in the County.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN
N/A

Respectfully submitted,

GREG COX
Vice-Chairman, First District

NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: ☐ Yes ☒ No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
☐ Yes ☒ No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
1/8/19 Board of Supervisors Meeting – Item 8.3

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Districts 1 and 4

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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