



City of Bloomington
Office of the Common Council

Open Letter from the Bloomington Common Council's Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee In Support of Maintaining the Services of the Emergency Shelter formerly known as *Martha's House*.

The Bloomington Common Council's Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee is pleased to submit our recommendations for 2015 funding. The Committee's funding allocations are guided by service to our community's most vulnerable residents. We deeply appreciate the tireless work of local non-profits who work to alleviate suffering by providing vital services such as food, shelter, and healthcare to those in emergency need.

Improving the common good is a collective effort. For that reason, we thank everyone in this generous community for their private and public support of non-profit agencies. The improvement of individual lives most in need makes our community stronger as a whole. While the Hopkins Committee works to support the critical work of our non-profits, some community issues, at some junctures, call for wide-spread, coordinated public support. We are at one of those junctures.

For the last decade, Martha's House has provided temporary emergency shelter for sober, drug-free adults who are experiencing homelessness and who are working toward becoming self-sufficient, productive citizens. This has been -- and still is -- an important shelter option for those who are serious about their addiction or alcoholism recovery or who would not otherwise fare as well in a low-barrier shelter. No other local agency provides this service.

This year, Martha's House was not among the Hopkins recipients due to a solemn reality: they are dissolving and closing their doors. Effective August 30, 2015 those who were housed under the safe, sober and case-worker model of housing, effectively become "unhoused." Up to 40 men and women in need of temporary housing will join the growing number of people who experience homelessness in our community.

The members of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee call upon members of the public and private sectors to work together to keep these shelter services in operation. While it may take years to achieve complete non-profit stability with a new management team, the current residents being served by this facility need our help now. This community has a few short months to come up with immediate funding and a strategy to save this essential emergency shelter and keep it within local control.

The Perry Township Board has agreed to provide the emergency funding to keep Martha's House running until the end of August. The members of the Jack Hopkins Social Services Committee **encourage all public sector entities** -- including the leadership of the City of Bloomington, Monroe County government, Perry and Bloomington Townships, and others -- to continue strategy discussions and to pool resources to provide the necessary interim funding until a long-term plan and management team can be identified. The next meeting to discuss the future of this emergency shelter will take place on **Monday, June 22 at 5:30 pm in the Perry Township Office on South Walnut. There is room at the planning table for all of us.**

2015 Jack Hopkins Social Services Funding Committee

Susan Sandberg (Chair), Darryl Neher, Dorothy Granger, Tim Mayer, Marty Spechler and Sue Sgambelluri