

REQUEST #1



Siuslaw Outreach Services

1576 W. 12th Street, P.O. Box 19000, Florence, OR 97439

Jacque M. Betz
City Manager
250 Hwy. 101
Florence, OR 97439

March 28, 2012

Dear Ms. Betz:

This is a request to increase the City's allocation to Siuslaw Outreach Services (SOS). We currently receive \$12,000. and it is my understanding there is a 2% increase proposed. This request is for a total increase of \$3,000.

As you probably know I just started here as Executive Director in January. Although I was given a solid overview by the board when I applied for the position, I have since been amazed by both the number of people SOS serves and at the severity and complexity of the kinds of issues our clients confront. I have also observed how often we respond to calls from the Florence Police Department, Oregon State Police, and the hospital. Many of these calls are after hours or on weekends or holidays, and our very dedicated staff is committed to responding quickly. We view this as very successful working partnerships.

Many of these services involve specialized advocacy services to victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. These situations are extremely traumatic for the victims, and the support of a trained advocate on the scene is invaluable. Just one example was when we were called out on Christmas Eve to assist a young mother who had been battered. We helped her and her child find emergency shelter and support.

We also help many individuals who are in need of emergency assistance for a wide range of reasons, and we provide help to people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. As a recent example we were called during the snowstorm to help a woman who was found by the police camped out in a restroom with no money and soaking wet from the storm. We helped her get dry clothes, food, and transportation.

We operate a 24 hour crisis line that has handled several potential suicide situations just in the time I have been here. Our volunteers and advocates have handled 3 very serious calls just in the last 4 days. The number of people we serve each year exceeds 1,000, and our office is busy every day.

I believe that SOS provides a service that is a valuable component for the quality of life in our community, and I also believe that our services help to allow Florence police officers to spend much more time doing police work.

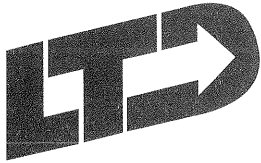
We certainly understand the current economic situation and the constraints on budgets everywhere. As it turns out, the very high unemployment rate (currently 14.1 %) in Florence creates even more pressure for our services even as our funding sources have been cutting back. Just last week, for example, our largest funder notified us of a budget reduction from 6-11%. We do have multiple funders but no one contract is large, so we have to do a lot of work just to maintain the level of revenue that we have now. Many of these contracts are on a reimbursement basis or are "pass-through" and allow very little for fundamental business operations.

This particular request, if granted, would not be allocated to a new "project" but would simply be used to help cover the costs of operations and continuing to employ and retain qualified staff. Our organization has had its share of struggles in the past but we have a dedicated board and staff who are committed to excellence, and we believe we are a significant asset to our city.

Thank you very much for considering this request. I would be happy to appear in person before the Budget Committee if that is desired.



David Wiegman
Executive Director



Lane Transit District

March 30, 2012

Jacque M. Betz
Florence City Manager
250 Highway 101
Florence, OR 97439

Dear Ms. Betz:

Attached is a copy of a *draft* operations budget for the *Rhody Express* and associated service required under the Americans with Disabilities Act for next fiscal year FY13 (July 1, 2012, through June 30, 2013).

Through collaboration between the City of Florence, Lane Transit District (LTD), and River Cities Taxi, the *Rhody Express* will provide nearly 13,000 one-way rides to the residents of Florence this year.

The money contributed by the City of Florence provides a portion of the local funds needed to match federal funding. Without these local dollars, we would be unable to receive the funds available through the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 program for support of rural and non-urbanized public transportation services. Last year, the City of Florence provided \$28,500 to continue operating the *Rhody Express* at the current weekday schedule from 10:00 a.m., to 6:00 p.m. For next year, the contribution level from the City of Florence is \$30,000. This represents a five percent increase.

While federal funding remained the same, costs especially for fuel have increased. LTD will increase the match provided through the Special Transportation Fund for out-of-district services by five percent to meet the anticipated increase in the overall budget and a projected ten percent increase in the price of fuel.

Once again, we want to thank The City of Florence for its contributions in helping to provide this critical link within your community for people who do not or choose not to drive.

Please let us know if you have any questions or wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Susan Hekimoglu
Accessible Services Specialist

TP/sjh
Attachment

cc: Members of the Florence Transportation Advisory Committee

