

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Mary Gourley](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment: 1-16-23: Unhoused Warming Centers; Horizon Shine Departure Concerns  
**Date:** Saturday, January 13, 2024 5:13:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [Warming Center Policy SANTA ROSA FINAL Update FINAL 1.9.23 202307.docx](#)  
[Sonoma County EOP Annex Extreme Temperature FINAL.pdf](#)

---

Mary: Public Comment for Council Meeting Tuesday, January 16, 2023, with (2) attachments.  
Thank you.

**To: Sebastopol City Council:**  
**Public Comment: 1-16-23: Unhoused Warming Centers; Horizon Shine Departure Concerns**

First, thank you for the prompt action in implementing a cold weather warming center for the unhoused two weekends ago, by Mayor Rich, City Manager Schultz, Chessy Etheridge of SAVS, host Mark DeSaulnier of the Cultural Center and his team, Police Chief Nelson and his officers for bringing the unhoused for shelter, and Kadyn Schumann and his team with the local contract service provider FS Global Solutions.

My understanding is that former Interim Fire Chief Jack Piccinini had been tasked with creating a plan for this winter's warming centers. I met with him personally on this during the summer. I understand his successor Interim Chief Bruce Martin was to have produced a plan for warming centers at tonight's meeting; he has departed, no plan is on tonight's agenda, and we have a new Interim Chief Derum. That is background history, not blaming. It frames where we are, as winter sets in.

- A list of volunteers from past years had been assembled and stands ready, as has been the Outreach Coordinator Maria Rico, for collaboration with the fire department or other as directed. The County was to have provided training and funding through its Department of Emergency Management but, with the exception of \$10K from Supervisor Hopkins, has not.

- o **Questions:** Will a task that was to have planned for mobilizing volunteers under the leadership of the public entity fire department, already budgeted as emergency first responder, now have to be privatized, at additional expense and amid limited financial resources?

How can a warming center now be implemented, to pop up as needed, without a mass of bureaucracy complicating and impeding a response to a cold weather emergency?

- - Other jurisdictions and advocates debate whether a discomfort level of 45 degrees, or 32 degrees and below which threatens death from freezing exposure, should be the standard. I suggest that 32 degrees be the benchmark for what can be done with our limited resources, to save lives. It is the figure used by the County in its guiding Extreme Temperature document called "The Annex," and in a model plan from the City of Santa Rosa which I earlier gave Chief Piccinini and Mayor Rich. I have provided both to new Interim Chief Derum, and attach copies for you herewith. FS Global Solutions also had an excellent management plan on site two weekends ago.

- o As I've said before, the charitable efforts of Sebastopol organizations support our unhoused at a certain level, beneath which they do not sink. It is by no means lavish; showers twice a week, hot meals three times a week, through the Barnabas Program of Sebastopol Christian Church and the other church Saturday Tables. The unhoused life is called "living rough" for a reason. We would all like to do more if we could, but we do what we can. **To that extent, let's not debate temperatures ranges of discomfort, but act so that people do not freeze.**

Separately, the Horizon Shine RV Village must be vacated by the end of February, approximately six weeks from tonight. Notwithstanding optimistic reports in the Press Democrat and Sebastopol Times, and the dedicated caseworkers on site, the fact is that most villagers are not close to being prepared to leave. There are no good answers as to where they, and their vehicle “homes,” will go. I alert the Council to this, for the welfare of these unhoused, and that of Sebastopol, and public safety if there are to be forced evictions and displacement. Thank you for your concern and attention.

Arthur George  
Chair, West County Homeless Advocates