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**CITY COUNCIL ALLOCATES HOUSING FUNDS TO LOCAL NONPROFITS
PROVIDING RENTAL ASSISTANCE TO RESIDENTS**

Covington, WA – At their April 28 meeting, Covington City Council voted unanimously to allocate funds procured from House Bill 1406 to two local nonprofit agencies – Vine Maple Place and Catholic Community Services – to provide rental assistance to local residents.

In 2019, the state legislature passed, and the governor signed into law, House Bill 1406 to encourage investments in affordable and supportive housing. To help accomplish this, the bill reallocates 0.0073 percent of the state’s existing sales tax to be committed to affordable housing projects and programs at the county and city level beginning in 2020 and lasting for 20 years. Specifically, the bill dictates that cities with a population of under 100,000, like Covington, may use the funds for rental assistance for low income residents.

In Covington, the estimated amount of funding to be reallocated by the bill will be about \$42,000 in 2020. However, this amount will likely be impacted by the current economic climate and downturn due to COVID-19 and will fluctuate as the economy fluctuates.

After a unanimous vote by council, 70 percent of the funds will be allocated to Vine Maple Place and 30 percent of the funds will be allocated to Catholic Community Services in 2020. Both agencies are currently receiving modest allocations from the city’s human services fund, however, the current need for rental assistance has skyrocketed due to the COVID-19 crisis.

“I think that these are two good organizations that are well developed and they can get the money out very quickly to where it is needed,” said councilmember Fran McGregor-Hollums who made the motion to approve the allocations at the council meeting.

“Given this unique situation that we are in right now, we do need to take care of Covington residents and our surrounding community urgently,” said councilmember Jennifer Harjehausen, who seconded the motion.

The city plans to distribute the funds to the two agencies as they are received on a monthly basis so that they can be used to help residents in need immediately.

Vine Maple Place serves the Covington and Maple Valley area and provides resources for the homeless to obtain housing and for single parent families in danger of losing their housing. Catholic Community Services provides many types of family services throughout western Washington including housing and shelter services.

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