

Request for Board Action Details

File #: 2022-360
Type: Administrative Item
Status: Passed
In control: Board of Commissioners
On agenda: 7/12/2022
Final action: 7/12/2022
Title: Public Health Water Gremlin Settlement Fund Special Project
Sponsors: Public Health
Indexes:
Code sections:
Attachments: 1. Resolution

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
7/12/2022	1	Board of Commissioners	approved	Pass

Sponsor: Public Health

Title
Public Health Water Gremlin Settlement Fund Special Project

Recommendation

1. Accept and approve the Water Gremlin Settlement Funds Special Project budget and financing plan in the amount of \$75,000.
2. Authorize the County Manager to account for the Public Health Water Gremlin Settlement Funds special project as a project budget in the Public Health Environmental Health Lead Hazard budget.

Background and Rationale

On December 27, 2019, Ramsey County District Court determined that Water Gremlin created a public health nuisance by failing to prevent lead dust from leaving their facility. The migration of lead dust from the facility into employee vehicles and homes, known as “take-home lead,” disproportionately impacted children in Ramsey County. As part of the settlement agreement, Water Gremlin was directed to pay for cleaning lead dust in employee vehicles and homes for those who opted into the service. Additionally, funds left over from the cleaning service would be directed to Ramsey County to use for lead poisoning prevention projects in the amount of no less than \$75,000. On February 2, 2022, Water Gremlin transmitted funds in the amount of \$75,000 to Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health department (Public Health).

Despite gains in reducing lead in our communities, lead poisoning remains a threat to children in Ramsey County. Ramsey County's Lead Program provides comprehensive lead poisoning prevention services for county residents. This partnership between the Environmental Health and Family Health Divisions of the Public Health department aims to reduce the number of the children with elevated lead levels in the county through multiple layers of prevention. Services provided by the Lead Program include conducting lead risk assessments, enforcing the correction of lead hazards, financing the mitigation or abatement of lead hazards, and providing case management services to lead poisoned children and their families.

A special project focused on lead poisoning prevention is worthy of the Public Health Water Gremlin Settlement Funds, which came at the cost of children's health and well-being. The use of this fund will be

towards primary prevention activities, but the specific programming is intended to be undetermined at this point. To authentically engage the community for input on programming services from this settlement, the project will engage with community stakeholders to plan, implement and evaluate lead poisoning prevention activities in Ramsey County. This project will align with ongoing primary prevention activities working to reduce exposure to lead hazards in our community for children at risk of lead exposure to reduce the chances of permanent damage inflicted by lead poisoning.

County Goals (Check those advanced by Action)

☒ Well-being

☐ Prosperity

☐ Opportunity

☐ Accountability

Racial Equity Impact

Lead poisoning disproportionately impacts people of color. Racial disparities in lead poisoning exist due to historical and current institutional policies, such as red lining and weak tenant protection laws that disproportionately expose communities of color to environmental hazards. Additionally, people of color are more likely to work in jobs that involve toxins like lead, which makes them and their families more susceptible to dangerous exposures. The Water Gremlin Settlement Funds Special Project will enhance the lead poisoning prevention services available to Ramsey County residents who are at risk for lead poisoning.

Community Participation Level and Impact

When Water Gremlin was temporarily shut down by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry due to take-home lead concerns, Public Health called upon their partners at Hmong American Partnership, Karen Organization of Minnesota and East Side Neighborhood Development Corporation to support blood lead testing clinics for employees and their families. These community-based organizations were invaluable to the success of these clinics and communication with the communities impacted by take-home lead dust. Public Health will partner with these organizations again to develop the programming of this project. All of these organizations represent communities and/or neighborhoods that are disproportionately impacted by lead exposure.

☒ Inform

☒ Consult

☒ Involve

☒ Collaborate

☐ Empower

Fiscal Impact

Funding for this special project is approved in the 2022-23 Water Gremlin Settlement Funds in the amount of \$75,000.

Last Previous Action

None.

Attachments

None.