

AVAILABILITY OF EMERGENCY FUNDS FOR THOSE IN NEED:

The Merriam Fund for the Silent Poor of Weston

October 2018

The purpose of this memorandum is to make you aware of a financial resource that is available to assist Weston residents who temporarily find themselves in a financial bind. The Merriam Trust for the Poor was established in 1865 by Weston resident Charles Merriam to assist people who are unexpectedly in a financial crisis. It is not intended (or able) to provide on-going or continued support. Examples of past support include payments to cover a month of heating oil, a mortgage payment, and so forth.

The Merriam Trust is managed by trustees who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and charged with disbursing the funds to assist people in need who meet Charles Merriam's criteria as interpreted for today's world. The challenge for the trustees is to identify people who qualify for and would benefit from this resource. Those requiring special assistance may be embarrassed to request or talk about. The trustees therefore are writing to people like you who are in a position to be aware of potential recipients- those who are having a difficult time and in need of some bridge support.

The Merriam Trust has been called a "quiet" fund because not many people are aware of it, and because of its sensitive nature. Requests and assistance are confidential. Should you become aware of someone who may benefit from temporary support from the Merriam Fund, please encourage them to reach out. Here are ways to do so:

Suggest the party in need **call the Board of Selectmen at 781-786-5020**. S/he should state they have an inquiry about the Merriam Trust. Queries will be directed to the Merriam Trustees. All such queries will be treated with the utmost discretion.

If the party is uncomfortable reaching out, you can make the initial inquiry on their behalf (if the question is agreeable). The party (or you) can **send an email in confidence to the Merriam Trust at: merriamfund@westonmass.org**

FAQs:

Q: *How much notice is required to complete a request?*

A: This depends on how urgent the request is. If necessary, the Trustees are able to complete a payment within days.

Q: *How are payments made?*

A: Payments are made directly to the organization to which payment is required (the oil company, mortgage company, etc). Funds are not directed to the requestor.

Q: *What if funds are needed on a weekend?*

A: The Trustees have established a process to minimize turnaround time.

Q: *What type of/how much information about my situation (an emergency) would need to be provided before a decision is made?*

A: Ideally, two Trust board members will meet with you in your home to gather information, to assess the financial situation, urgency, income, and other matters related to the situation in question.