



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, January 25, 2022

TO: January 25, 2022

FROM: ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER VIDES

**SUBJECT: ADOPT RESOLUTION APPOINTING REPRESENTATIVES TO THE
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY HOUSING FOR HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
POLICY BOARD**

STATEMENT OF ISSUES:

The current CoC Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) adopted a new governance charter intended to increase the effectiveness and impact of the CoC in preventing and ending homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Through the newly established governance structure the City of Watsonville will have two seats at the CoC Board and the Mayor has nominated Tamara Vides, City Manager Pro Tempore and Suzi Merriam, Community Development Department Director to a two-year term on the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

In 1995, the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed the concept of a Continuum of Care (CoC) through its annual homelessness assistance grants. At that time, the CoC was envisioned as a local network of relevant organizations and stakeholders that plan and coordinate funding for services and housing to assist individuals and families at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.

The Federal Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act) codified the role of a local CoC to coordinate efforts to prevent and end homelessness. Since the passage of the HEARTH Act, an increasing number of federal, state, and local programs, and funding resources, require involvement and collaboration with the local CoC.

Previously Santa Cruz County CoC was known as the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP). On April 27, 2021, the City Council accepted and filed the final version of the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz: A Strategic Framework for Addressing Homelessness in Santa Cruz County*, which specifically called for County staff to “design, launch, and operate a new regional coalition, anchored by a leadership and accountability structure.” County staff from the Housing for Health Division worked with the current HAP Board and Executive Committee to develop a new governance charter and CoC coalition structure consistent with the Framework.

On June 18, 2021, the HAP Board adopted a new governance charter that outlined a process for establishing a new CoC entity in 2022. The new CoC entity will be known as the Santa Cruz County Housing for Health Partnership and will be overseen by its Policy Board. Meetings will be open to the public with agendas and meeting minutes published on an accessible website.

The governance charter calls for the Policy Board to include nine jurisdictional, three operational and working group, and three partner system representatives. Policy Board representatives will attend a minimum of six meetings per year and agree to serve for two-year terms. The jurisdictional representatives include appointments by city councils and the County Board of Supervisors. The cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz have two appointments each. Capitola and Scotts Valley will share a seat and alternate appointing a representative to the Board for two-year terms.

DISCUSSION:

The current CoC Homeless Action Partnership (HAP) adopted a new governance charter intended to increase the effectiveness and impact of the CoC in preventing and ending homelessness in Santa Cruz County.

Rates of homelessness vary throughout the United States and California. Research has established strong correlations between rates of homelessness in each community and the housing affordability gap between household incomes and housing costs. However, the housing affordability gap alone does not fully explain different regional rates of homelessness. A variety of other factors contribute to homelessness including the ability of local health, housing, human service, and criminal justice systems to work collaboratively with the community on shared goals and initiatives focused on prevention and re-housing efforts.

The Mayor has recommended to appoint Tamara Vides, City Manager Pro Tempore and Suzi Merriam, Community Development Director to a two-year term on the Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board. If appointed, they will serve at the pleasure of the Council until their two-year term expires.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Appointing Watsonville representatives to the Santa Cruz Housing for Health Policy Board supports the Strategic Plan goal of Housing.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Appointment of a representative to the Santa Cruz Housing for Health Policy Board will have no direct financial impact on the City, other than the commitment of staff time to serve on the Board.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The City Council can choose not to appointment Tamara Vides and Suzi Merriam.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

None.