

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report

Meeting: July 25, 2024

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Youth Liaison Program



Recommended Action: Authorize the City Manager to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with United Way Santa Cruz County for the City of Capitola's participation in the Santa Cruz County Youth Liaison Program; and nominate two Council Members to serve as mentors to selected Youth Liaison participants.

Background: United Way of Santa Cruz County partners with donors, volunteers, advocates, governments, and other nonprofits to co-design collaborative programs that lead to positive and sustainable outcomes for the highest needs youth. The Youth Action Network (YAN) is an initiative coordinated by the United Way of Santa Cruz County (United Way), that focuses on increasing meaningful participation for youth within the county.

The City is dedicated to promoting youth community connectedness by supporting youth education, leadership, and well-being, and is committed to working with organizations and initiatives to implement a framework that outlines how the City will amplify youth voice in City decision-making. To that end, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 4328, the Capitola Children and Youth Bill of Rights on July 27, 2023

Discussion: The City Council established a fiscal year goal to participate in the newly formed Youth Liaison Program. The Youth Liaison Program is designed as a connection between young people and City Council members, ensuring that youth perspectives are considered in the local government decision-making process. The Program will allow high-school students to participate in municipal government and learn about the role of the City Council in our region.

United Way staff, along with staff from the cities of Santa Cruz and Capitola have worked together to create the Youth Liaison Program, a first-of-its-kind effort in our County. While United Way will provide formal onboarding (including necessary paperwork and appropriate measures to ensure youth are protected throughout the Liaison Program), City staff will work closely with United Way to further develop this exciting chapter in youth participation within local governments.

Once admitted, Youth Liaisons will attend City Council meetings, meet with their designated Council Member Mentor monthly to communicate youth-centered priorities in the community and learn about being an elected official. At the close of the program, Liaisons will report out to the City Council on their experience. To incentivize students and compensate them for their time, participants will be awarded a \$650 stipend by United Way.

A Memorandum of Understanding is attached to this report, which outlines Program duties for the City of Capitola and United Way.

Based on City Council direction during the February Goals and Priorities workshop, and the earlier adoption of the Children and Youth Bill of Rights, City staff recommends Capitola host two Youth Liaisons for the nine-month school term, beginning in September. City and United Way staff have a working session scheduled in mid-August to determine the selection process and will work together to assess applications and choose liaisons.

Members of the City Council are imperative to the success of this program. Because the City will provide stipend funding for two participants, Staff recommends that Council nominate two members to serve as mentors to partner with the Capitola Youth Liaisons.

Fiscal Impact: If approved, the City will provide \$1,300 to United Way to provide two youth liaison stipends in fiscal year 2024-25. Those funds were included in the adopted fiscal year budget.

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Understanding

Report Prepared By: Chloé Woodmansee, Assistant to the City Manager

Reviewed By: Julia Gautho, City Clerk

Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager