

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: January 13, 2022

From: City Manager Department

Subject: Appoint Representative to the Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board

Recommended Action: Appoint the City Manager to a two-year term on the Continuum of Care (CoC) Board, known as the Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board, as nominated by the Mayor.

Background: 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. HUD guidelines call for CoC representation from: nonprofit homelessness assistance providers, victim services providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social services providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations serving veterans, and homeless or formerly homeless individuals. Our local CoC region includes all jurisdictions in the County of Santa Cruz.

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.

HUD regulations establish responsibilities for a CoC that include: regular meeting and appointment schedules, a governance charter, monitoring and evaluating programs funded with CoC resources, establishment of a coordinated system for people experiencing homelessness, and the development of standards for program-types supported with CoC resources. A CoC Board must follow HUD guidelines including Federal conflict of interest regulations. More details about CoC responsibilities can be found in Attachment 1 – Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care.

According to HUD, the CoC Board composition must: include at least one homeless or formerly homeless individual; and represent the relevant organizations and projects serving homeless subpopulations, such as persons with substance use disorders; persons with HIV/AIDS; veterans; the chronically homeless; families with children; unaccompanied youth, the seriously mentally ill; and victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Previously our County CoC was known as the Homeless Action Partnership (HAP). On June 10, 2021, the City of Capitola adopted the *Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework*, 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 governance charter is included as Attachment 2. 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 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. Capitola will be appointing one individual for the initial board.

Discussion: In support of the approved Housing for a Healthy Santa Cruz Strategic Framework, 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. The Capitola City Council plays an important role in appointing one representative to the new Santa Cruz Housing for Health Partnership Policy Board.

Rates of homelessness in the United States 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. Nominees to the CoC Board should possess a commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; a passion for working in innovative, dynamic, and collaborative efforts; and a desire to bring personal and professional resources and influence networks into alignment with shared strategic plans and goals.

Consistent with the process used in other jurisdictions, the Mayor should propose a nomination to the new Policy Board. Capitola's City Manager has significant experience working on regional homeless issues as a long-serving member of the HAP Executive Committee. With that experience, and the technical nature of the work, Mayor Storey nominates Jamie Goldstein to represent the City of Capitola on the new Policy Committee.

Fiscal 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.

Attachments:

1. Establishing and Operating a Continuum of Care
2. Housing for Health Partnership Governance Charter

Report Prepared and Approved By: Chloe Woodmansee, City Clerk