

Fee Waivers / Sponsorships

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DATE: September 8, 2020

TO: Members of the Board of Supervisors

FROM: Sheryl Bratton, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Reset Fee Waivers and Board Sponsorships Policy; and
Establish Use of Public Funds Limitation for Memberships

Attached for review is a 3-year summary of Board Approved Fee Waivers and Sponsorships that have been paid from Board Contingency Funds since FY 2017-18. Also attached are three policies that have been broadly used as guidance: a Fee Waive Policy that was approved by the Board in 2009, the Sonoma Water Sponsorship policy approved in 2014, and the Community Investment Fund Community Sponsorship Policy that was last updated in August 2019.

Board members have periodically expressed interest to standardized county services fee waivers and sponsorships, therefore a brief conversation on the topic is warranted. Staff offer three options for the Board's consideration.

Option 1. Maintain the Status quo. Continue to rely upon the two existing policies that have generally guided the Board and approve requests on a case-by-case basis.

Option 2. Determine maximum amount of Contingency funds available for fee waivers and sponsorships that would be split equally between all districts similar to how the Community Investment Funds are distributed.

Option 3. Revise/Update Fee Waiver Policy and include Sponsorships that also governs department sponsorships. If Board selects this option, staff will need Board direction on the following questions:

- a. Should the policy establish a maximum sponsorship amount that a department can approve (e.g., \$2500)? If yes, should limits apply to Sonoma Water and the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District?
- b. Should the policy prohibit multi-year fee waivers after some period of time?
- c. Should new policy provisions apply to the Community Investment funds?

Beyond requesting Board direction to reset the Fee Waiver-Sponsorship policy and funding, staff requests the Board delegate authority to the County Administrator and Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector to establish and enforce a new Administrative Policy prohibiting the use of public funds to pay for memberships to organizations that formally endorse candidates and/or ballot issues.

Attachments:

3-Year Summary of Fee Waivers and Sponsorships

2009 Fee Waiver Policy

2014 Sonoma Water Sponsorship Policy

2019 Community Investment Board Policy

Fee Waiver and Sponsorship Data By District

FY 2019-20 Fee Waivers		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
07/19/19	Bodega Fire Dept Big Event					\$1,503	\$1,503
07/19/19	Sonoma Vets Building Blood Drive	\$3,304					\$3,303
07/23/19	Lazy Bear Week, Guerneville Vets Bldg					\$6,240	\$6,240
08/06/19	River Historical Society Car Show					\$1,079	\$1,079
08/13/19	Petaluma People Svcs Cntr Sr Nutrition Prog		\$1,176				\$1,176
08/13/19	Forestville Public Downtown Park					\$8,368	\$8,368
08/20/19	WCCS Senior Meals Dining Sites					\$2,364	\$2,364
09/10/19	Boy Scouts Annual Council Dinner			\$385			\$385
09/24/19	Zoning Permit Kiwanis Club of Cloverdale				\$2,114		\$2,114
09/24/19	West County Community Services Thanksgiving Meal					\$701	\$701
10/08/19	Gravenstein Apple Fair Law Enforcement					\$3,414	\$3,414
11/05/19	Agency on Aging Community Focus Grp			\$120			\$120
11/19/19	Penngrove Parade of Lights		\$878				\$878
11/19/19	PCAM Annual Santa Fly-In				\$650		\$650
12/10/19	Free Community Christmas Dinner					\$619	\$619
01/04/20	Kick Off Fair Art Mural Springs Plaza	\$878					\$878
02/25/20	Farm Bureau 2020 Ag Days Awards Dinner			\$1,485			\$1,485
02/25/20	Forestville Youth Park Parade/Fundraiser					\$4,939	\$4,939
03/10/20	Bodega Bay Grange Kitchen Upgrade					\$788	\$788
03/17/20	Fool's Day Parade, Occidental Chamber Arts					\$878	\$878
05/12/20	Brookdale Subdivision, X Zone creation (\$15k Not Approved)					\$0	\$0
06/23/20	Sonoma Vets Bldg Blood Drive	\$3,685					\$3,685
06/23/20	Health Inspect Sonoma Home Meals	\$1,134					\$1,134
		\$9,001	\$2,054	\$1,990	\$2,764	\$30,893	\$46,701
Sponsorships		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
10/08/19	19th Annual Tribute to Veterans			\$500			\$500
01/14/20	AARP Tax Aide Program Sebastopol Vets Bldg		\$4,275				\$4,275
	Total	\$0	\$4,275	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$4,775

FY 2018-19 Fee Waivers		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
07/10/18	Kenwood July 4th Hometown Parade	\$632					\$632
07/10/18	Penngrove Social Fireman 4th of July Parade		\$847				\$847
07/10/18	Russian River Car Show					\$1,079	\$1,079
07/10/18	Counsel on Aging's Dining Sites	\$1,240	\$1,240	\$1,240	\$1,240	\$1,240	\$6,202
07/24/18	Petaluma People Services Senior Nutrition Program		\$1,069				\$1,069
07/24/18	Bodega Volunteer Fire Dept. Big Event					\$1,503	\$1,503
07/24/18	Blood Centers of Pacific Bi-Monthly Blood Drive	\$3,303					\$3,303
08/07/18	Cloverdale Kiwanis Vineyard Races				\$2,007		\$2,007
08/07/18	Bodega Bay Fireworks Display					\$1,160	\$1,160
08/14/18	West County Community Services Senior Meals					\$2,256	\$2,256
09/11/18	Redwood Empire Food Bank Food Distrib Prog		\$4,695	\$1,980		\$3,600	\$10,275
9/25/2018	UCCE Living with Fire Workshops				\$988		\$988
9/25/2018	Lakeville VFD (does not utilize contingency funds)*						\$0
10/17/18	Redwood Empire Food Bank Free Weekly Meals					\$3,280	\$3,280
11/13/18	Pacific Coast Air Museum, Santa Fly-In				\$650		\$650
12/04/18	Penngrove Social Firemen Holiday Parade of Lights		\$847				\$847
12/11/18	REFB Bi-monthly Food Distribution, Petaluma Vets		\$1,890				\$1,890
12/11/18	Free Community Christmas Dinner Guerneville Vets					\$619	\$619
02/05/19	Forestville Youth Park Annual Parade/Fundraiser					\$4,636	\$4,636
	Total	\$5,175	\$10,588	\$3,220	\$4,885	\$19,373	\$43,243
Sponsorships		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
08/28/18	Petaluma Education Foundation (\$5,000)**		\$2,500				\$2,500
10/17/18	18th Annual Tribute to Veterans			\$500			\$500
10/17/18	2018 Latino Health Forum	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
12/04/18	Sebastopol Center Arts, AARP Tax-Aide Program					\$4,425	\$4,425
01/08/19	Mark West Community Preschool Fire Relief Fundrsr				\$2,814		\$2,814
03/12/19	AMVETS Post 40 Welcome Home Vets Day BBQ			\$406			\$406
	Total	\$1,000	\$3,500	\$1,906	\$3,814	\$5,425	\$15,645

* Not approved for funding

** Sponsorship split equally between Contingencies and District 2 CIP Awards

FY 2017-18 Fee Waivers		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
07/11/17	Russian River Car Show (Item #24) - Fee Waiver					\$1,923	\$1,923
08/01/17	Bodega Volunteer Fire Dpt's big Event (Item#17) - Fee Waiver					\$2,007	\$2,007
08/22/17	Vets Building Use by Redwood Empire Food Bank		\$1,980	\$2,310		\$5,140	\$9,430
11/14/17	West County Community Services, Free Dinners Program					\$1,789	\$1,789
12/05/17	Penngrove Holiday Parade of Lights		\$821				\$821
12/05/17	West County Community Services Thanksgiving Event					\$501	\$501
12/05/17	RR Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence Free Community Christmas Dinner					\$619	\$619
12/05/17	Veterans of Foreign Wars Black History Program		\$538				\$538
12/05/17	Veterans of Foreign Wars Veterans Shelter Thank you		\$151				\$151
01/23/18	Highway 101 Forum - Vets Bldg Fee Waiver		\$491				\$491
03/13/18	Forestville Youth Park's Fundraiser					\$4,636	\$4,636
03/13/18	Occidental Center for the Arts Fool's Day Parade					\$847	\$847
03/13/18	Redwood Empire Food Bank; Guerneville Veteran's Bldg Rental					\$2,400	\$2,400
03/13/18	Redwood Empire Food Bank; Santa Rosa Veteran's Bldg Rental			\$2,310			\$2,310
05/22/18	Rotary Club of Rohnert Park-Cotati for a Veterans Appreciation		\$1,076				\$1,076
05/22/18	Health Inspection fees for Sonoma Home Meals	\$984					\$984
	Total	\$984	\$5,057	\$4,620	\$0	\$19,862	\$30,523
Sponsorships		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	TOTAL
08/15/17	17th Annual Tribute to Veterans			\$500			\$500
09/12/17	Latino State of the County Event			\$8,000			\$8,000
09/26/17	Petaluma Education Foundation*		\$5,198				\$5,198
12/12/17	AARP Tax-Aide Program at Sebastopol Veteran's Memorial Building					\$4,625	\$4,625
03/13/18	Redwood Empire Food Bank; Sebastopol Center for the Arts Bldg Rental					\$2,740	\$2,740
	Total	\$0	\$5,198	\$8,500	\$0	\$7,365	\$21,063

Community Investment Fund Policy

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT or Hotel Bed Tax) is authorized under State Revenue and Taxation Code Section 7280. TOT is levied in Sonoma County at a rate of 12% - in 2016 voters approved Measure L, increasing TOT from 9% to 12%. This policy allocates TOT to the General Fund, Community Investment, and Measure L. The Board of Supervisors (Board) allocates one-third of the first 9% of TOT funds to the General Fund, and the remaining funds will be allocated per this policy.

In the early hours of October 9, 2017, the County of Sonoma responded to the Sonoma Complex Fires, which burned 173 square miles and destroyed over 7,000 structures, including 5,143 homes. It will take years to recover fully from the devastating fires. As a result, this policy will provide a four-year funding plan to maintain consistent funding for critical services that support the community's recovery efforts.

II. COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

A. Economic Development

1. Economic Development Board – \$3,225,000

Funds support the Economic Development Board in their mission to enable local businesses to maintain or expand their operations, including \$125,000 for Creative Sonoma to award to the arts community.

2. Sonoma County Tourism – 1.25 percentage points of the first 9%

Funds will be allocated based on revenue to Sonoma County Tourism through a contract approved by the Board of Supervisors to support advertising and promotional efforts.

B. Community Grants and District Priorities

1. Local Events, Organizations, District Priorities - \$500,000

Funds will be allocated to events, organizations, and Supervisorial District priorities (see Appendix A for program requirements). The funds available for this category are divided equally among supervisorial districts. Unused funds will be accounted for by Supervisorial District and available for use in future years. Organizations may make their requests annually to each Supervisorial District.

C. Community Services

1. Fire Dispatch Fees - \$900,000

Fire Dispatch Fees for REDCOM services.

2. Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resiliency Campaign - \$900,000

Funding will support the vegetation management program as approved by the Board of Supervisors.

3. District Formation Funds - \$175,000

Rural areas of Sonoma County are experiencing an increased need for municipal services. Funds may be used for professional services to establish Special Districts that will enable communities to provide self-generated funding to address municipal challenges.

4. Regional Parks – \$2,650,000

Funding will support parks operations, maintenance, and improvements.

5. Office of Recovery and Resiliency - \$300,000

Funding will support the Office of Recovery and Resiliency to implement the Board's priorities within the Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

D. Program Administration and Integrity

1. Collections/Audit/Legal – \$550,000

Funding will support County Departments who provide revenue and tax collection services, grantee audit services, and legal advice.

E. Community Investment Fund Balance

1. Allocate any fund balance of the first 9% to General Fund priorities determined annually by the Board of Supervisors during Budget Hearings.

III. MEASURE L

Measure L funds are tracked separately. The categories established for Measure L funding are based on the educational information provided to voters as part of the Measure L campaign. Funding will be distributed based on revenue.

A. Fire Services, 40%

Funding will support enhanced fire protection services as determined by the Board.

B. Road Repair and Improvement, 20%

Funding will support projects included in the Transportation and Public Works Roads Plan adopted by the Board.

C. Affordable Housing, 13%

Funding will support affordable housing projects. The Community Development Commission will recommend funding priorities to the Board during the annual budget process.

D. Tourism Impact Fund, 10%

Funding will be distributed through grants or to County departments to meet the unique and urgent needs of areas within unincorporated Sonoma County. Funds in this category may be used for activities such as safety improvements, environmental impact mitigation, public safety, and other tourism mitigation activities, such as parking enforcement. Funds may be used for projects that benefit the community, or to support organizations that coordinate community improvements, such as the Municipal Advisory Councils.

Funds will be allocated to each Supervisorial District proportionate to the amount of TOT collected by the District in the previous fiscal year. The Board of Supervisors will consider these needs on semi-annual basis. Unused funds in a single fiscal year will be accounted for and available in following years.

E. Event Facilities Improvements, 9%

Funding will support operations, maintenance, and improvements of County owned facilities that enhance recreational activities, including, but not limited to Veterans Halls. The County Administrator's Office will recommend funding priorities to the Board during the annual budget process.

F. Code Enforcement and Compliance, 8%

No more than 8% of Measure L Funds may be used to enhance administration of this Program, including tax collection services, grantee audit services, and code enforcement and operator compliance activities. The County Administrator's Office shall recommend funding within the annual budget process to fund these activities.

Appendix A

Community Grants and District Priorities

POLICY STATEMENT

Per the Community Investment Fund Policy, \$500,000 will be allocated annually to events, organizations, and Supervisorial District priorities. The funds available for this category are divided equally among Supervisorial Districts. Unused funds will be accounted for and available for use in future years. Organizations may make their requests annually to each Supervisorial District.

PROGRAM INTENT

The County of Sonoma invites non-profit organizations to apply for grant funding for local events that will support businesses or enhance culture, and organizations that provide a benefit to the community.

The Board of Supervisors (Board) may award funding to County Departments or to Supervisorial Districts to complete priority projects. Funding may be used to cover salary and benefit costs associated with changed or additional staff, and other costs associated with added staffing such as office space.

GUIDELINES

District Supervisors will evaluate applications for Community Grants using the following criteria before bringing awards to the Board for approval.

- Events, organizations, and programs must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - Enhance the cultural diversity and richness of Sonoma County
 - Provide a benefit to the community, the economy, or the environment
 - Promote Sonoma County and encourage visitors to frequent the County throughout the year
- Events must be held within the County of Sonoma

Applications are open year-round at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/CAO/Services/Community-Investment-Program/>.

Funding for staffing must be related to a Supervisorial District priority which provides a benefit to the community.

- Funding may be used for enhanced or changed staffing such as interns, support staff, or administrative management positions; positions allocated to a Supervisorial District will remain/be at-will
- Standard County processes and timelines must be followed with regard to classification changes, position allocation changes, and budgetary adjustments



County of Sonoma Fee Waiver Policy

Authority: Board of Supervisors
Approval Date: June 2, 2009
Effective Date: July 1, 2009

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines to be used to evaluate requests for fee waivers and to implement a structure and process through which consistent information for fee waiver requests will be collected and evaluated.

2. Background

Sonoma County is facing unprecedented fiscal challenges. As a result of the economic downturn, job and income losses, declining home values, and reduced consumption, the County's major sources of revenue property tax and sales tax have declined substantially. The situation is exacerbated by an increase in demand for county services. In light of this new fiscal reality, the county is reviewing all resource allocation decisions. Fee waivers, are an expense to the County General Fund. Fees are established to pay for the cost of a service provided by a county department. When a fee waiver is granted, the County General Fund pays the department in an amount equal to the fee waived.

3. Policy

The Board of Supervisors may, at their sole discretion, approve or disapprove fee waiver requests. Effective July 1, 2009, the following general guidelines will be used to assist in the determination of whether a requested fee waiver is eligible or ineligible.

Eligible for fee waivers	Ineligible for fee waivers
Community based organizations (CBO) or non-profits providing a direct service that is similar to or complimentary to a key county policy goal or direct service that the county is typically responsible for providing; e.g. emergency or economic assistance or basic sustenance needs (emergency food, shelter, etc.)	Flood elevation program fees
	Other county department fees
	Other governmental agencies – unless they can demonstrate an inability to pay the county fee
Governmental agencies that do not receive tax funding and can demonstrate an inability to pay the county fee	Fund raising events - where attendees pay a fee for admission to the event or in the case of festivals where vendors pay to participate in the event

4. Phased in Reduction for CBOs and Non-Profits

CBOs and non-profits that have received a fee waiver in the 12 months prior to the effective date of this policy, for an activity/event that may no longer be eligible under this policy, will be considered for a phased reduction in fees as follows:

- Year 1 – Up to two-thirds of the fee amount previously waived, may be waived
- Year 2 – Up to one-third of the fee amount previously waived, may be waived
- Year 3 – Fee waiver ineligible

The phased-in reduction does not apply to CBOs and non-profits who received fee waivers for a fund raising activity/event, where the CBO or non-profit has the ability to set entry or participation fees at a level necessary to cover costs, including the cost of any associated fees.

5. Fee Waiver Request Form

Fee waiver requests submitted on or after June 2, 2009, must be accompanied by a Fee Waiver Request Form (Attachment A). Copies of this form may be obtained from the County of Sonoma, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, located at 575 Administration Drive, Room 100A, Santa Rosa, CA, 95403, or at the following website: <http://www.sonoma-county.org/board/faq.htm#wavier> .

Fee Waiver Request Forms must be complete, signed, and accompanied by supporting documentation to demonstrate eligibility for the requested fee waiver. Demonstrated eligibility does not assure approval of a fee waiver request.

Completed Fee Waiver Request Forms shall be submitted to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at the address above. The Clerk will forward requests to the Board Member specified by the applicant.

SONOMA COUNTY WATER AGENCY SPONSORSHIP POLICY

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency”) accepts requests for sponsorship subject to the following guidelines:

- The Water Agency will consider opportunities that support our mission of securing our future by investing in our water resources, environment and the community.
- The Water Agency will consider sponsoring activities, events, and programs that will significantly educate the public about water supply, quality or water-use efficiency; watershed function or health; recycled water or wastewater treatment; flood risk reduction; or the water-energy nexus, global climate change or greenhouse gas emissions.
- Providing sponsorship implies that the Water Agency agrees with the principles of the entity it plans to support. Therefore, the sponsorship opportunity must be consistent with government policies, such as being non-discriminatory, and should provide access for every individual in the community regardless of age, race, religion, disability or sexual preference.

Purpose of Policy

The Water Agency receives numerous requests for sponsorship, and has established guidelines to ensure that we make the best sponsorship decisions given limited resources.

Definition

For the purposes of this policy, “sponsorship” is a mutually beneficial business relationship between the Water Agency and another entity, whereby the Water Agency contributes funds, materials, or services in return for recognition, acknowledgement or other promotional consideration.

Sponsorship benefits are more than the display of the Water Agency’s name and logo. Sponsorship benefits could include a range of marketing opportunities, including but not limited to such things as booth or table space, media releases, award presentations, inclusion in newsletters, displays and exhibitions which publicize the water issues or other objectives related to the Water Agency’s mission.

Sponsorship requests must be received a minimum of three months before event date to allow time for processing and to ensure that materials/staffing are available.

Questions? Contact Ann DuBay or Brad Sherwood in Community and Governmental Affairs.