



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-0387, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County

Department or Agency Name(s): Department of Health Services, Community Development Commission

Staff Name and Phone Number: Barbie Robinson, 565-7876; Margaret Van Vliet, 565-7504

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisory District(s): Countywide

Title:

Behavioral Health/Homeless Consultant Agreement for Public Outreach and Assistance with a Possible Ballot Measure

Recommended Actions:

Authorize the Director of Health Services and the Executive Director of the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to execute a professional services agreement with Terris Barnes Walters Boigon Heath, Inc. to develop and support implementation of a strategic public outreach and engagement plan to consider options and recommendations for increasing revenue, including the possibility of a behavioral health and homeless services revenue measure in November 2020, for the period June 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020 in an amount not-to-exceed \$458,300.

Executive Summary:

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission request authorization from the Board of Supervisors to execute a professional services agreement with Terris Barnes Walters Boigon Heath, Inc., also known as TBWB Strategies, to develop and support implementation of a strategic public outreach and engagement plan to consider options and recommendations for increasing revenue, including the possibility of a behavioral health and homeless services revenue measure in November 2020.

Discussion:

The Sonoma County Department of Health Services' Behavioral Health Division is responsible for providing an array of mental health services to the County's most vulnerable residents who suffer from moderate to severe mental illness including prevention and early intervention services, intensive outpatient services, crisis services, medication support services, residential services, and inpatient care services. In addition, the Behavioral Health Division is responsible for providing substance use disorder services to those residents suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. In 2018, the Department of Health Services provided behavioral health services to approximately 5,000 high-need individuals in the County.

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission is the lead agency for homeless services in the County. It deploys a combination of federal, state, and local funds to contract with community-based providers that deliver an array of services to clients in Sonoma County, including community shelters, transitional housing, housing placement, rent assistance, eviction prevention, and street outreach. According to the 2018 Sonoma County Homeless Point-In-Time Census and Survey (2018 Survey), in 2018 2,996 individuals experienced homelessness, an increase of 161 individuals from the prior year, with 35 percent of the homeless

having psychiatric condition and 33 percent have a substance use disorder.

A combination of factors have resulted in increased homelessness and impacted the Department of Health Services' ability to meet the increasing need for mental health services including the increasing cost of services; rising home prices; and stagnant wages. In addition, a primary factor impacting the Department of Health Services' ability to meet the mental health needs of the community is the State's decision to redirect 1991 Mental Health Realignment (1991 Realignment) to address social services caseload growth for a five-year period from fiscal year 2016-2017 through fiscal year 2020-2021. 1991 Realignment is one of the primary sources of funding for mental health services. Despite increasing costs and demand for services, 1991 Realignment has not increased since fiscal year 2016-2017, significantly contributing to the Department of Health Services' fiscal challenges.

To address the gap between the need for services and available revenue, over the past several years the Board of Supervisors and the Department of Health Services has invested significant one-time funding to maintain access to critical behavioral health services in the County. However, even with the allocation of these resources, there is a significant revenue gap between the community's need for services and the amount of appropriated funding the Department of Health Services receives from local, State, and Federal sources. In order to address the increasing demand for mental health and homeless services, an ongoing source of revenue is needed. Without it, painful reductions to programs and services will undoubtedly occur, having a detrimental effect on vulnerable populations and our community. The ripple effects of increased homelessness and untreated mental health services downstream on our criminal justice system, health systems, and educational systems cannot be understated - resulting in increased incarcerations, emergency room visits, and homeless on our streets.

These compounding issues demand creative approaches to generate additional revenue to support the needs of the most vulnerable residents of Sonoma County. Successful efforts in other states and counties have increased public funding for facilities, staffing, and programs supporting those with mental illness, facing substance use disorder issues, and experiencing homelessness. For example, in 2017 voters in Mendocino County passed Measure B, a half-cent sales tax measure that increased funding for mental health facilities and services. Other examples include Measure H, a March 2017 Los Angeles County sales tax for homeless services and prevention and Measure P, a November 2018 City of Berkeley real property transfer tax to fund homeless services.

In light of the critical situation, in June 2018, your Board directed the Department of Health Services, in partnership with the Community Development Commission, to explore the placement of a revenue measure supporting behavioral health and homeless services on the November 2020 ballot.

A key first step in exploring a revenue measure is the retention of a qualified consultant to develop and support the implementation of a strategic public outreach and engagement plan to assess the need and support for the proposed revenue measure including: 1) develop and conduct opinion polling, and incorporate recommendations into the outreach and engagement plan; 2) develop and support implementation of a community education plan based on initial polling results to engage key sectors, residents, businesses, and community groups to align support and to address questions and concerns related to a 2020 ballot measure; and 3) conduct feasibility analysis and develop recommendations for possible revenue options, including a 2020 ballot measure and an accompanying expenditure plan.

On December 21, 2018 the Department of Health Services released a request for proposals for a consultant to provide the above outreach and engagement services. The request for proposals was posted on the County of

Sonoma Supplier Portal, the Sonoma County website including the Department of Health Services page, and directly emailed to potential vendors. Proposals were due by 2:00 p.m., January 23, 2019.

A total of five proposals were received. An evaluation committee was formed to review the proposals that included two individuals from the Department of Health Services, and a single representative from the Community Development Commission, County Counsel, and the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County. Proposals were ranked based on qualifications and experience, local preference, prior projects, cultural competence, and budget.

On February 26, 2019 the evaluation committee's recommendation was forwarded to the Department of Health Services' Director Barbie Robinson for consideration. Prior to submitting a recommendation to the Board, the decision was made to conduct an interview of the top three candidates requesting further clarification on their proposals. On April 12, 2019 Barbie Robinson, along with Rod Stroud, Department of Health Services Assistant Director, Margaret Van Vliet, Executive Director of the Community Development Commission, and Linda Schiltgen, County Counsel, interviewed representatives from the top three proposers. Each proposer was provided 55 minutes to provide an overview of their proposal.

Based on the scoring of the evaluation committee and the results of the April 12th interviews, the Department of Health Services and Community Development Commission recommend TBWB Strategies to provide the outreach and engagement services identified above. A copy of TBWB Strategies January 23, 2019 Proposal for Ballot Measure Consulting Services is provided as Attachment 3.

TBWB is a non-partisan strategy and communications consulting firm with significant expertise in public outreach efforts to develop revenue options, including bond, tax, and other public finance ballot measures supporting public programs, services, and facilities. TBWB Strategies has extensive qualifications and experience providing advice to public agencies in Sonoma County and across the State on revenue measures, including work on over 430 successful public finance ballot measures, including bonds, parcel taxes, sales taxes, transients occupancy taxes, utility users taxes, and assessments and fees. (Please see page 7 of the TBWB Proposal for a list of Revenue Measures).

If approved by your Board, TBWB Strategies will enter into an agreement with the County of Sonoma and the Community Development Commission and will subcontract with EMC Research to conduct polling, SCI Consulting Group to provide research and analysis for ballot measure and expenditure plan options, and Middlebrook Communications to assist with stakeholder outreach. Pages 32-36 of the attached TBWB Proposal provide an overview of the experience of each member of the TBWB team.

TBWB Strategies provided a detailed overview of their project approach that would consist of the following three benchmarks over a 13-month term beginning in June 2019 through June 2020:

- 1) Feasibility Study to conduct public outreach and polling and determine if, and under what conditions, the County can pass a local funding measure - and if so, what type of measure is feasible.
- 2) Build consensus with outreach, awareness building, and public input strategies that develop recommendations to consider revenue options based on the public's input.
- 3) If supported by the public outreach effort, develop a strong measure by aligning the measure's features with the community's priorities and sensitivities.

TBWB's estimated cost to provide the services described above is \$458,300 as detailed in the Cost Summary provided as Attachment 2. If it is determined through public outreach and polling that a local funding measure is not feasible, the contract will be terminated and the cost will be limited to \$114,250 plus reasonable

expenses. In addition, if add-on services such as digital/social media communications and direct mailers to County residents are not purchased, or are partially purchased, the total contract cost will be reduced by as much as \$200,000. Total research costs may vary based on the extent of public opinion polling requested. Public opinion polling efforts will engage the public on their opinions regarding prioritization of a variety of public services and potentially competing revenue measures, including measures anticipated for Fire Services, and the extensions for Sonoma County Transit Authority and the Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit (SMART). The Department of Health Services and the Community Development Commission will each provide funding in an amount not greater than \$229,150 for the TBWB agreement.

While the top three candidates were all qualified consultants, for reasons outlined above and based on TBWB's significant experience working with public agencies to gather public input, consider multiple revenue options, and successfully support numerous local governments' efforts to develop revenue measures in response to the public's input, the Department of Health Services and the Community Development Commission recommend contracting with TBWB Strategies for consultation services related to development and implementation of a strategic outreach and engagement plan in support of a possible behavioral health and homeless services revenue measure on the November 2020 ballot.

The Department would like to note that one of the top three proposers withdrew from the County's competitive procurement process in early May after accepting community outreach agreements with other organizations. The proposer indicated a concern that their other work may inhibit their ability to effectively meet the needs of the County as their reason for withdrawal from the County's process.

Prior Board Actions:

None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 18-19 Adopted	FY 19-20 Projected	FY 20-21 Projected
Budgeted Expenses	50,000	408,300	0
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	50,000	408,300	0
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	50,000	408,300	0

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

The Department of Health Services and the Community Development Commission will each provide funding for the TBWB agreement in the amount of \$229,150. Department of Health Services funding source is Intergovernmental Transfer revenue. The Community Development Commission cost share will be funded with

CDC Housing fund available fund balance.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll)	Monthly Salary Range (A - I Step)	Additions (number)	Deletions (number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

Agreement with TBWB Strategies for Ballot Measure Consulting Services, Cost Summary, TBWB Strategies Proposal for Ballot Measure Consulting Services

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None