Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0879, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services
Staff Name and Phone Number: Angela Struckmann, 565-4396
Vote Requirement: Majority
Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Recommended Action:
Adopt a Gold Resolution commending Karen Fies for over 34 years of service to the community with the Sonoma County Human Services Department.

Executive Summary:
Karen Fies retired on October 5, 2020, just shy of serving 35 years with the Sonoma County Human Services Department. Karen retired as the department director, where she led the Department for the last four years.

Discussion:
Karen Fies began her career with the Sonoma County Department of Social Services on March 11, 1986, as an eligibility worker in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. She had started her career in public service a year earlier as an eligibility worker with Yolo County before coming to Sonoma.

After her first year, Karen promoted to a Social Service Worker in the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program. In 1996 she promoted to Program Planning and Evaluation Analyst, with the special assignment of developing Welfare Reform for the County.

In 1999, Karen was selected as the County's first management intern in a newly created fellowship program at the County Administrator's Office. She then promoted to Program Development Manager in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program, and in 2005 promoted again to Section Manager in the Employment & Training Division.

Karen took over as Division Director of the Employment & Training Division in January 2007. During her time as Division Director, Karen implemented the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps, served as the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Director, and helped lead the department through the transition to the Affordable Care Act.

In October 2012, Karen took the position of Interim Assistant Director of the Human Services Department, becoming the permanent Assistant Director six months later.

In September 2016, Karen became the Human Services Department Director. Under her leadership, Human Services expanded services to the community and opened the first neighborhood service center in Petaluma. By the time Karen retired, the department had over 900 employees and a budget of over $354 million.

During her career, Karen served on a number of boards, commissions, and policy boards including the State's Master Plan for Aging, the CalSAWS Joint Powers Authority, the United Way of the Wine Country, the Career Technical Education Foundation, Upstream Investments, Health Action, First 5, the Workforce Investment Board, and the Community Corrections Partnership.

Karen has been an active member of the County Welfare Directors Association (most recently serving as Chair of the Adult Services Committee), the Bay Area Social Services Consortium (BASSC), the CalWIN Policy Board, and the Pride United Advisory Board; she was past officer of the California Workforce Association.

During her time as Director, Karen led the department through three major wildfires, a flood, and the coronavirus pandemic with resilience and compassion. Through her leadership during multiple disasters, she ensured that the Human Services Department provided excellent care and services to the community as it endured unprecedented challenges.

Karen will be remembered for her passion for public service and care for the community, her support and dedication to her employees, her generous and calm demeanor, and her advice to always "have courage and be kind."

Prior Board Actions:
None

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	**FY 20-21 Adopted**	**FY 21-22 Projected**	**FY 22-23 Projected**
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures	**0**	**0**	**0**
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources	**0**	**0**	**0**

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:
N/A

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

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):
N/A

Attachments:
Resolution

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:
N/A