



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: HOUSING

File #: 20-607

Board Meeting Date: 8/4/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors
From: Raymond Hodges, Director Department of Housing
Subject: Accepting a donation from Mr. Raghavendran to fund a Department of Housing internship position for three months

RECOMMENDATION:

Accepting a donation from Ramanan Raghavendran in the amount of \$13,800 to the Department of Housing to fund an intern position for a three-month period during the first two quarters of FY 2020-21.

BACKGROUND:

Following the promotion of one Housing and Community Development (HCD) Supervisor to Director of Department of Housing (DOH), the departure of the HCD Senior Policy Analyst to another agency, and the promotion of the previous Intern to HCD Specialist II, DOH is currently understaffed.

Furthermore, on March 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 101080 of the California Health and Safety Code, the San Mateo County Health Officer (the "Health Officer") declared a local health emergency throughout the County related to COVID-19. The Board of Supervisors (the "Board") ratified and extended this declaration of local health emergency, which remains in effect. In addition, on March 3, 2020, pursuant to Section 8630 of the California Government Code and Chapter 2.46 of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, the San Mateo County Director of Emergency Services proclaimed a local emergency throughout San Mateo County related to COVID-19. The Board ratified and extended the proclamation of local emergency, and this local emergency remains in effect.

On March 16, 2020, the Health Officer issued an order that, among other things, directed all individuals currently living within San Mateo County to shelter in their place of residence ("Shelter-in-Place Order"), and authorizes individuals to leave their residences only for certain "Essential Activities," "Essential Governmental Functions," or to operate "Essential Businesses," all as defined in the Shelter-in-Place Order. Several times since March 16, 2020, and most recently, on June 4, 2020, the Health Officer issued revised Shelter-in-Place Orders extending the Original Shelter-in-Place Order due to evidence of continued significant community transmission of COVID-19 within the County and throughout the Bay Area. Affordable housing was designated an "Essential Activity" while the Shelter-in-Place Order, originally issued on March 16, 2020, remained in effect.

In addition, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government has allocated additional funding to the County through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act to address housing and homeless needs. The State has also allocated some of its own CARES Act funding to the County to address homelessness. Consequently, with the confluence of these factors, the workload of existing DOH staff has increased significantly over the past few months.

DISCUSSION:

With the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the County has experienced budget constraints, necessitating a hiring freeze for positions reliant on County resources. DOH sought a waiver from the hiring freeze in order to hire an intern, and that waiver was approved by the County Manager's Office on July 2, 2020.

DOH initiated a recruitment for an intern position just prior to the original Shelter in Place Order going into effect, and several qualified candidates who submitted applications were interviewed. Around that time, Ramanan Raghavendran, a member of the HCD Committee, generously offered to donate \$13,800 to fund a DOH intern position for a period of three months.

Staff has identified several tasks that would be appropriate for an Intern, including support functions that are critical to issuing loans to affordable housing developers and cannot be accomplished by existing staff due to work volume and time constraints. Mr. Raghavendran's donation would allow DOH to hire an Intern for a three-month period to assist DOH with these tasks and provide important support to DOH in its efforts to help create more affordable housing for County residents.

Pursuant to County Admin Memo B-3, "[r]eceipt of each gift or bequest having a value of more than \$2,500 or with significant conditions or stipulations shall be acknowledged in writing by the [County] department head and referred to the Board of Supervisors for acceptance or rejection."

Accordingly, DOH is requesting that the Board accept a donation from Ramanan Raghavendran in the amount of \$13,800 to fund an intern position for a period of three months during the first two quarters of FY 2020-21.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the resolution as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no Net County Cost.