



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 17-0016

Agenda Date: 1/24/2017
Item No.: 7.1.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Board Confirmation of New Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services.

RECOMMENDATION:

Confirm the appointment of Susan Stanton as the new Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services for the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

SUMMARY:

RATIONALE

Board Governance Policy Executive Limitation 3.8 states that a “BAO shall present an appointment of a Chief-level position to the Board for confirmation.”

Following a competitive open recruitment process, the Interim Chief Executive Officer has selected a candidate for the position of Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services and requests that the Board confirm the appointment.

SUMMARY

The Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services (COO AS), formerly known as the Chief Administrative Officer, is a critical executive leadership position that is high profile, complex in nature, and requires the highest level of accountability. The position is tasked with directing, managing, and overseeing four administrative divisions: Human Resources, Financial Planning & Management Services, Information Technology, and General Services with a total operating budget of \$102 million and a staff of approximately 180.

The COO AS reports directly to the CEO and is designated as unclassified/at-will. The COO AS serves as a key member of the executive leadership team and represents the CEO and the District in interactions with employees, external partners, the community, other agencies, and key stakeholders. A copy of the recruitment brochure is attached (Attachment 1).

SELECTION PROCESS

Since early last year, the District began implementing a new recruitment process for executive positions. All candidates must go through three rounds of interviews to ensure fairness and

transparency, with the initial interviews consisting of a panel of external subject matter experts. Once the external panelists make their recommendations, the top candidates are invited back to meet with a panel of internal staff, which includes reporting staff in the division, labor union representatives, and other staff outside the division who will be working closely with the individual. The top candidates also must meet with the CEO and the direct hiring manager. Once the interviews are complete, the CEO and hiring manager solicit feedback from the internal staff panel to make an informed decision on their selection. Diversity in race, gender, work area, and classification are all considered in the makeup of each of the interview panels.

The Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services recruitment was conducted by the external executive recruitment firm, Bob Murray & Associates. The position received 114 applications. After initial screenings and phone interviews, the applicant pool was narrowed down to five candidates who were invited to the District to participate in a formal interview. Three external panelists were asked to be a part of the round one evaluation process. The external panelists included City Managers from a number of Bay Area jurisdictions. Two candidates were subsequently invited to move forward to the next round to meet with a panel of internal staff, the CEO, and the COOs of Watersheds and Water Utility. The internal staff panel makeup included: representatives from IT, Ethics & EEO, Administrative and General services; a representative from the Employees Association; and a representative from the Office of Government Relations and Communications.

Interim CEO, Norma Camacho, COO Water Utility, Jim Fiedler, and Interim COO Watersheds, Melanie Richardson also met with the top two candidates. Once all interviews were completed, the Chiefs met with the internal staff panel to deliberate on the best candidate for the position. A thorough background check of the final candidate's references, work history, criminal background, and driving record were conducted.

CANDIDATE

The selected candidate is Susan Stanton. Ms. Stanton has over 30 years of experience managing small and large cities, employing between 350 to 1,000 employees throughout the nation. She has managed various departments, including Police, Fire, Public Works, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Finance. Ms. Stanton also has experience managing potable and reclaimed water systems, an advanced wastewater reclamation system, and an electric generation and distribution utility, during her various tenures as City Manager.

In her most recent capacity, Ms. Stanton served as the City Manager for the City of Greenfield, CA, in Monterey County, where she helped improve the city's fiscal health resulting in an upgrade in Standard & Poor's bond rating from a "BB" to an "A-" rating. She also helped to negotiate a \$9.9 million Energy Management program to install a solar system and related energy conservation measures that is projected to produce \$4.5 million of net benefits to the city in the course of the next 25 years.

Prior to that, Ms. Stanton served as the City Manager for Lake Worth and Largo, Florida, and the City Administrator for Berea, Kentucky.

Ms. Stanton has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and a Master's in Public Administration,

both from the University of Florida. She has also received her Senior Executive in State and Local Government Training from Harvard University's JFK School of Government. Ms. Stanton's background check, degree verification, professional reference checks all confirm her qualification and attributes as a highly qualified candidate for the role of Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services.

Ms. Stanton's accomplishments and work experiences are attached for further review (Attachment 2).

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Ms. Stanton will assume the position of Chief Operating Officer of Administrative Services with an annual starting salary of \$232,502.40.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have the potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: COO AS Recruitment Brochure
Attachment 2: S. Stanton Resume

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Norma Camacho, 408-630-2084