



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 17-0226

Agenda Date: 4/25/2017

Item No.: 7.3.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Board Confirmation of New Chief of External Affairs.

RECOMMENDATION:

Confirm the appointment of Rick Callender as the new Chief of External Affairs 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 of External Affairs (CEA) and requests that the Board confirm the appointment.

SUMMARY

The Chief of External Affairs, is a newly created executive leadership position responsible for the management and oversight the District’s Community Engagement, Government Relations, and Communications units, with a team of approximately 30 employees. The Chief of External Affairs (CEA) is an at-will executive leadership position that reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEA will serve as a key member of the executive leadership team and represent the CEO and the District in interactions with employees, the public, and other agencies and organizations. The CEA will oversee the strategic planning and integration of external policies and legislation as it relates to the business interests of the District. The incumbent will be responsible for managing the District’s relationships with the community, government officials, the media, and other key stakeholders.

The CEA will lead the efforts in developing the District’s strategy/plan for external communications to the media, community, and the public, including managing how the District engages with the community in the areas of education, volunteerism, and through grant programs. Additionally, the CEA will lead all government relations efforts on local, regional, state, and federal levels, and be responsible for keeping the CEO and other District staff informed of public policies that directly affect

operations.

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 of External Affairs recruitment was conducted by the external executive recruitment firm, Bob Murray & Associates. The position received 32 applicants. After initial screenings and phone interviews, the applicant pool was narrowed down to 3 finalists who were invited to the District to participate in a formal external panel interview. Two candidates were moved to the next round for interviews with two internal panels.

The internal staff panel included: representatives from HR, Utilities, Watersheds, and General services; a representative from the Employees Association; as well as a representative from the Office of Government Relations and Communications.

Interim CEO, Norma Camacho, COO Administrative Services, Susan Stanton, 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. Rick Callender was thereafter selected as the new Chief of External Affairs by Interim CEO Norma Camacho.

CANDIDATE

Mr. Callender is uniquely qualified for the CEA position as he has a broad range of community experience, management, volunteerism, government relations and experience with our organization and our Board of Directors. The following is a brief description of his background and preparation for the CEA role.

Mr. Callender has worked with the Santa Clara Valley Water District since 1996 and currently works for the Santa Clara Valley Water District as their Deputy Administrative Officer for the Offices of Government Relations and Communications. In this position he is responsible for strategic advice and counsel, leading and managing public affairs, and for external and internal communications, and all government relations efforts at the Federal, State and local level, which includes developing

positive working relationships and implementing strategic outreach, advocacy, media relations and community stakeholder relationship building efforts.

In September of 2000 he took a leave of absence to successfully lead the Yes on Measure B Campaign for Clean, Safe Creeks in Santa Clara Valley. This countywide campaign targeted over 500,000 voters and raised over \$375 million dollars for the Santa Clara Valley Water District. In 2012 he led another effort which led to another funding measure, Safe Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection, which passed by the largest margin of any special tax in the history of Santa Clara County. The measure passed by 74% and raised over half a billion dollars.

Mr. Callender has also worked as a Special Assistant to past City of San Jose Mayor Susan Hammer, as a Field Campaign Organizer for the California Democratic Party, as a Congressional Fellow for the United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Energy and as a Congressional Fellow to Congressman Ronald V. Dellums.

He earned his Bachelors of Science degree in Industrial Engineering and Technology with an emphasis in electronic and computer technology from California State University, Chico, completed all coursework for his Masters of Arts in Public Administration from San Jose State University, earned his Juris Doctorate from Northwestern California University School of Law, and is member of the California State Bar.

He has attended and graduated from eight executive leadership programs at different universities throughout the nation. These programs include; The University of Minnesota, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Syracuse University, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in Syracuse, New York; Howard University in Washington D.C.; University Of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky; Florida International University in Miami, Florida, Clark/Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia; San Jose State University and the Bureau of Government Research and the Labor/Community Leader Institute, hosted by the South Bay Labor Council and San Jose State University

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Rick Callender will assume the position of Chief of External Affairs on May 8, 2017 with an annual starting salary of \$229,000.

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: CEA Recruitment Brochure

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UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:
Norma Camacho-408-630-2084