

**Agenda  
County of Sonoma  
Commission on the Status of Women**

**Meeting held through publicly available link via zoom as well as in person at 575 Administration Drive, Ste 117C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403**

**Thursday** **May 8, 2025** **6:00PM**

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**First District:** Joanne M. Brown (OAL), Nancy Padian, Haunani Pakaki

**Second District:** Katie Gordon, Shernaz Mejos

**Third District:** Ofra Isler, Melanie Jones-Carter (Vice-Chair), Katarina Giudice-White

**Fourth District:** Gina Fortino Dickson (Chair), Letitia Hanke, Izzy Arreguin

**Fifth District:** Zobida McCorquodale (Leave of absence), Elizabeth Beaty

The May 8, 2025, Commission on the Status of Women Meeting will be facilitated in person. Members of the public can watch, listen, or join the meeting using one of the three following methods:

1. Join in person:

Human Resources Large Training Room

575 Administration Drive, Suite 117C, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Limited seating is available for public participants.

2. Join virtually via Zoom:

Participate by computer, table, or smartphone application. Go to:

<https://sonomacounty.zoom.us/j/94202019002?pwd=V3JCazd0MFcvR2Q3c0FYK2x3ZjRpQT09>

Webinar ID: 942 0201 9002

Passcode: 252743

3. Join in Zoom by telephone:

Dial +1 (669) 900 9128

Webinar ID: 942 0201 9002

Passcode: 252743

**Instructions for the Public:**

**Agendas and Materials:**

Agendas and most supporting materials are available on the Commission's website at <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Commission-on-Status-of-Women/Calendar/>

Due to legal, copyright, privacy or policy considerations, not all materials are posted online. **NOTE:** Materials that are not posted will be available directly from the Commission at [sococsw@sonoma-county.org](mailto:sococsw@sonoma-county.org).

**Disabled Accommodation:**

If you have a disability which requires an accommodation, an alternative format, or requires another person to assist you while attending this meeting, please contact the Deputy Clerk at (707) 565-1851, as soon as possible to ensure arrangements for accommodation.

**Approval of the Consent Calendar:**

The Consent Calendar includes routine financial and administrative actions that are usually approved by a single majority vote. There will be no discussion on these items prior to voting on the motion unless Commission Members request specific items be discussed and/or removed from the Consent Calendar.

**Public Comment:**

Any member of the audience desiring to address the Commission on a matter on the agenda: Members of the public are invited to join this meeting in person or via Zoom teleconferencing. In order that all interested parties have an opportunity to speak, please be brief and limit your comments to the subject under discussion. Speakers will be limited to three minutes to speak; time limitations are at the discretion of the Chair. While members of the public are welcome to address the Commission, under the Brown Act, Commission members may not deliberate or take action on items not on the agenda, and generally may only listen.

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call****2. Land Acknowledgement**

The Commission on the Status of Women of Sonoma County recognizes that we are on the ancestral lands of the Pomo, Wappo, and Coast Miwok, who are the original stewards of this land. We further acknowledge that the office of the Commission on the Status of Women resides on Southern Pomo land in Santa Rosa. We respect and honor the past, present, and future generations, and are grateful for the opportunity to give our respect to the first inhabitants.

**3. Open Time for Public Comment**

At the beginning of each Commission meeting, any member of the public may address the Commission concerning any item not on the Commission's agenda. Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes unless otherwise specified by the Chair or the Presiding Officer. The public will be given an opportunity to speak on each business item at the time it is called. The Commission may discuss and/or take action regarding any or all of the items listed below.

**4. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Jan Blalock Award Ceremony**

Celebrating a commissioner for her years of dedication to women and girls of Sonoma County.

**5. Consent Calendar**

- a. Approval of the February 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- b. Approval of the April 10, 2025 Meeting Minutes

## **6. Officer Reports, Commissioner Announcements, Administrative Updates**

Officers and Staff to discuss administrative-related matters including, but not limited to, field trip ideas and speaker coordination. Commissioners to provide any commission-related announcements, report on communications with supervisors, and announce any tabling opportunities.

- a. Please submit all reimbursements by June 6<sup>th</sup>. The fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Sonoma County Pride is on Saturday, May 31, 2025.
- c. Spirit Award Ceremony is on June 12, 2025 during CSW regular meeting.

## **7. Commissioner Announcements and Agenda Items for June 12, 2025 Commission Meeting**

Commissioners to provide any commission-related announcements, report on communications with supervisors, announce any tabling opportunities, and provide any agenda items for future meetings.

## **8. Openings And Appointments**

Officers will report out on current openings.

- a. Welcome Sharnaz Mejos representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and completing their oath of office.
- b. One vacant position in the 2nd district and one in the 5th district.

## **9. AD HOC AND PROJECT UPDATES**

Limited to 3 minutes per ad hoc and project

- a. Junior Commission Educational Project
- b. Reproductive Equity
- c. Biz Entrepreneurship
- d. Legislative Advisory Group
- e. Communications Teams
- f. Community Engagement Working Group
- g. Bylaws

## **10. Business Items**

- a. **Nomination and Election**  
Take nominations and vote for Officers
- b. **Unhoused and Unheard White Paper**  
Review and vote on the content to share with the Board of Supervisors.
- c. **Bylaws Revisions**  
Review and vote on the revised bylaws recommendations.
- d. **Budget**  
Review ad hoc budgets and approve to reallocate funds

## **11. Adjournment**

**DRAFT-MINUTES**  
**COUNTY OF SONOMA**  
**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**Thursday, February 13, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

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**Commissioners Present:**

**First District:** Joanne M. Brown (OAL), Nancy Padian\*, Haunani Pakaki

**Second District:** Katie Gordon, Rebecca Kaykas-Wolff

**Third District:** Ofra Isler, Melanie Jones-Carter (Vice-Chair), Katarina Giudice-White

**Fourth District:** Gina Fortino Dickson (Chair), Letitia Hanke\*\*

**Fifth District:** Elizabeth Beaty

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Fourth District:** Izzy Arreguin (Leave of absence)

**Fifth District:** Zobida McCorquodale (Leave of absence)

\*Commissioner Padian attended via Zoom due per AB2449 and left early at approximately at 6:47pm.

\*Commissioner Hanke left early at approximately at 8:30pm.

**Meeting held through publicly available link via Zoom Meeting, and in-person.**

**1. Call To Order, Roll Call**

Meeting called to order at approximately 6:01 PM. Roll call taken by Staff.

**2. Land Acknowledgement**

Commissioner Giudice-White read the Land Acknowledgement.

**3. Open Time for Public Comment**

No Public Comment.

**4. Consent Calendar**

a. Approval of the January 9, 2025, Meeting Minutes

b. Commission on the Status of Women Biennial Work Plan Report

Chair Fortino Dickson announced that some sections of the biennial work plan report might be revised per County of Sonoma Human Resources (HR) recommendations. The Commission agreed to postpone considering the report until the March meeting after the Officers and HR meet to discuss the potential revisions. Three separate motions were made and voted upon:

(1) First motion to remove part b. Commission on the Status of Women Biennial Work Plan Report from the consent calendar.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Gordon                      Ayes: 10              Noes: 0  
Second: Vice-Chair Jones-Carter                      Absent: 2              Abstained: 1  
Commissioners McCorquodale and Arreguin are on leave of absence. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

(2) Second motion to approve the consent calendar- the January 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Beaty                      Ayes: 9              Noes: 0  
Second: Commissioner Gordon                      Absent: 2              Abstained: 2  
Commissioners McCorquodale and Arreguin are on leave of absence. Commissioner Giudice-White abstained. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

No Public Comment.

(3)Third motion to move the Commission on the Status of Women Biennial Work Plan Report to March meeting.

Motion: Commissioner Brown                      Ayes: 10              Noes: 0  
Second: Vice-Chair Jones-Carter                      Absent: 2              Abstained: 1  
Commissioners McCorquodale and Arreguin are on leave of absence. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

## **5. Officer Reports and Administrative Updates**

- a. Chair Fortino Dickson announced that Commissioner Isler will be resigning from the Commission after man years of service on the CSW, and a new Junior Commission Project Program Manager is needed. Commissioner Padian will help but will not be the lead. No decision was made.
- b. Chair Fortino Dickson reminded Commissioners to contact each City Council in the County to proclaim Women’s History Month. Commissioners volunteered to reach out to specific cities. The Proclamation is already calendared in Sonoma for March 5,2025.

- c. Chair Fortino Dickson reminded Commissioners that the Board of Supervisor will adopt Women's History Month Gold resolution on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 1:30pm and invited everyone to attend.
- d. Chair Fortino Dickson summarized Sonoma State University's budget deficit problem, i.e., Sonoma State administration is in the process of financially restructuring including layoffs and program cuts such as eliminating women's and gender studies. The Commission has been asked to support maintaining women's and gender studies. There will be a Town Hall on February 21, 2025. Commissioner Brown proposed that the CSW submit a written statement and made a motion to empower the Chair to draft a brief statement of concerns including the impact of this significant reorganization of Sonoma State without sufficient input from the public on the consequences on faculty, students, the bigger community and to, support all efforts to find a way to provide the funding that would allow a temporary reprieve until a more permanent solution can be found.

No Public Comment.

Motion: Commissioner Brown                      Ayes: 10                      Noes: 0  
Second: Commissioner Padian                      Absent: 2                      Abstained: 1  
Commissioners McCorquodale and Arreguin are on leave of absence. Chair Fortino Dickson abstained as Chair. Motion passed.

## **6. Strategic Planning**

The Commission proposed to restructure the way the Commission does their work by eliminating the ad hoc model and working together to bring different topics that women and girls of Sonoma County are facing to their monthly meetings. This process will educate the Commission on those topics and help more effective advocacy and action. The Commission spent most of the remainder of the meeting brainstorming in breakout groups ideas of implementing the new meeting structure. The Commission concluded the meeting by selecting their first topic, Homelessness. They will continue this discussion on March 13, 2025, during their regular meeting.

## **7. Commissioner Announcements and Agenda Items for March 13, 2025 Commission Meeting**

- a. Continue selecting meeting topics

## **8. ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

**DRAFT-MINUTES**  
**COUNTY OF SONOMA**  
**COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

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**Thursday, April 10, 2025**

**6:00 PM**

**Hybrid Meeting**

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**Commissioners Present:**

**First District:** Joanne M. Brown (OAL), Haunani Pakaki\*

**Second District:** Katie Gordon

**Third District:** Ofra Isler, Melanie Jones-Carter (Vice-Chair), Katarina Giudice-White

**Fourth District:** Gina Fortino Dickson (Chair), Letitia Hanke

**Fifth District:** Elizabeth Beaty\*\*

**Commissioners Absent:**

**First District:** Nancy Padian

**Fourth District:** Izzy Arreguin (Leave of absence)

**Fifth District:** Zobida McCorquodale (Leave of absence)

\*Commissioner Pakaki arrived late at approximately at 6:05pm.

\*\*Commissioner Beaty attended via Zoom due per AB2449 and arrived late at approximately at 6:39pm.

**Meeting held through publicly available link via Zoom Meeting, and in-person.**

**1. Call To Order, Roll Call**

Meeting called to order at approximately 6:03 PM. Roll call taken by Staff.

**2. Land Acknowledgement**

Vice- Chair Jones-Carter read the Land Acknowledgement.

**3. Open Time for Public Comment**

- Esai Gonzalez

**4. Unhoused and Unheard Discussion**

The unhoused among women in Sonoma County is an escalating crisis shaped by trauma, gender-based violence, systemic gaps, and an inequitable housing system. In response to this growing issue, the Commission on the Status of Women held a discussion to center the voices of women with lived experiences shared their stories and organizations such as Catholic Charities of the Northwest California, The Living Room, County Health Services Department- Homelessness Services Division, and Petaluma People Services Center talked about the

challenges they face in providing services to the community. After the discussion, the Commission will develop a white paper to advocate the change that is needed in Sonoma County.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.



## Executive Summary

Homelessness among women in Sonoma County is an escalating crisis shaped by trauma, gender-based violence, systemic gaps, and an inequitable housing system. Although women make up at least 37% of the local unhoused population, their experiences are often hidden and unaddressed in both policy and public perception. Aging women, survivors of domestic violence, single mothers, and working professionals are increasingly unable to access stable housing due to rigid eligibility systems, unaffordable rents, and a fragmented support network.

In response to this growing issue, the Commission on the Status of Women held a public hearing to center the voices of women with lived experience alongside those of frontline service providers and experts.<sup>1</sup> The stories shared at this event reveal the urgent need for policy reforms and a housing-first approach rooted in dignity and equity. A critical theme that emerged was the need for a restructured housing voucher program—one that responds more effectively to vulnerability and real-time needs.

This white paper outlines the unique challenges faced by unhoused women in Sonoma County and offers actionable recommendations for system-wide improvements. By investing in compassionate, needs-based solutions, Sonoma County can lead the way in ensuring every woman has access to safe, stable, and supportive housing.

## The Invisible Crisis of Women’s Homelessness

Women in Sonoma County often do not fit the typical narrative or public image of homelessness. Many are single mothers, aging retirees, or survivors of domestic violence and trauma. Because they are more likely to avoid encampments and public spaces where safety is a concern, their homelessness remains largely hidden. Consequently, they are often overlooked by policy and undercounted in statistics.

One woman, **Lucy**, shared how she has spent two years couch surfing with her dog while dealing with chronic health issues, including seizures. Despite actively seeking stability, Lucy has been turned away from shelters for not meeting priority criteria like addiction recovery or recent

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the volunteer speakers were changed to protect their identities.

incarceration. Her brother, recently released from prison, was able to secure housing within a month, while Lucy remains in limbo.

She desperately wants to hold down a job, but the instability of her housing situation and the need to care for her dog, combined with her health issues, create overwhelming barriers. If she had access to stable housing and healthcare, not only would her medical needs be met, but her dog—her only companion and source of comfort—would have a safe place to stay. This security would empower her to pursue and maintain employment, a step she is both willing and eager to take. Her story reflects the broader systemic issue: support often goes not to those most in need, but to those who meet rigid qualifications.

### **Trauma, Violence, and Systemic Barriers**

Gender-based violence is a consistent thread running through the experiences of unhoused women in Sonoma County. According to The Living Room, 83% of the women they serve have fled domestic violence. Sexual assault, trafficking, and bullying are disturbingly common in shelters and encampments. This ongoing trauma is both a cause and a consequence of housing instability.

**Kelly**, a survivor of sex trafficking and childhood abuse, found a rare sense of safety and stability at Caritas Family Center. With secure housing and access to childcare, she was finally able to begin healing, enroll in college, and imagine a new future for herself and her children. Her transformation underscores how housing, when paired with supportive services, can be the foundation for long-term recovery and reintegration.

However, for many women, that opportunity never comes. **Noelle**, who was pregnant during her homelessness, utilized every service available to her yet gave birth without stable housing. Only after navigating a patchwork of supports and living temporarily with family did she receive a housing voucher—months too late to prevent the trauma of child protective services' involvement. Though now housed, she remains financially insecure, navigating the immense challenges of single motherhood without consistent support.

### **The Voucher System: A “Golden Ticket” That Too Few Can Redeem**

The housing voucher program was described by multiple panelists as a “golden ticket,” yet the system is failing the very people it is meant to serve. Vouchers are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis, with little consideration for urgency or vulnerability. The waiting lists are long, and when vouchers are finally awarded, many recipients discover they cannot find a landlord willing to accept them.

Even women who are employed full-time are unable to afford market-rate housing. **Jocy**, despite holding a managerial position and earning more than she ever has, still cannot afford to live anywhere in the county. Her girlfriend, who is transgender and unhoused, lives out of the back of a car—categorizing her as an even higher at-risk case.

Additionally, the use of background checks as a prerequisite for housing or services often serves as a gatekeeping tool that penalizes women for past mistakes—mistakes that, in many cases, stem directly from poverty, abuse, or lack of access to services in the first place. These policies perpetuate cycles of instability instead of offering a pathway out.

### **Service Providers in Crisis**

The weight of these systemic failures is also felt by those on the frontlines. Staff at shelters and nonprofits often face burnout, housing insecurity, and a lack of mental health support themselves. Organizations struggle with funding that prioritizes new, "innovative" programs over essential operating support, forcing them to divert resources or create workaround projects to meet grant requirements.

As **Elece Hempel**, Executive Director of Petaluma People Services Center, noted, the fastest-growing segment of unhoused women in the region are those over 65—many of whom live in mobile home parks and are now facing eviction without alternatives. The psychological effects of isolation, especially among seniors who can no longer drive or access food banks, are profound and overlooked.

### **Policy Recommendations: A Healthier Housing Voucher System**

To address these issues, the Commission on the Status of Women recommends an overhaul of the housing voucher system, centered on equity, urgency, and human dignity.

#### **1. Transition to a Needs-Based Allocation System**

Move away from first-come, first-served distribution. Implement a triage model that prioritizes women facing domestic violence, aging populations, single mothers, and those at risk of immediate harm.

#### **2. Expand Acceptance and Availability of Voucher-Eligible Housing**

Create incentives for landlords to accept housing vouchers through risk mitigation funds, tax benefits, and streamlined inspection processes.

#### **3. Eliminate Discriminatory Eligibility Requirements**

Remove unnecessary background check barriers that disqualify individuals based on past events tied to their experience of homelessness and trauma.

#### **4. Pair Vouchers with Wraparound Services**

Housing alone is not enough. Voucher recipients should also receive case management, childcare assistance, transportation support, and financial coaching.

#### **5. Improve Transparency and Navigation Support**

Ensure applicants receive timely updates, clear communication, and dedicated staff support throughout the voucher process.

#### **6. Collect and Disaggregate Data by Gender and Age**

Better data collection will enable the county to respond more effectively to the needs of women experiencing homelessness.

### **Conclusion**

Women experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County are not invisible—their stories highlight not only the depth of the crisis but also the potential for resilience and recovery when appropriate support is available. It is time for the County to respond with compassion, urgency, and accountability. Reforming the housing voucher program is a critical first step toward building a Sonoma County where every woman has a safe place to call home.

# Bylaws Of The County of Sonoma Commission on the Status of Women

Revised and Approved by Commission October 8, 2009  
Approved by Board of Supervisors – \_\_\_\_\_

## Article I Name

The name of this Commission is the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, hereafter referred to as the "Commission."

## Article II Purpose

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma declared, in 1975, its policy to take affirmative action to eliminate the practice of discrimination and prejudice on account of sex. Therefore, this policy, pursuant to and in accordance with the law, the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women was established.

The purpose of the Commission is to promote equal rights and opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all women and girls and to address issues of discrimination and prejudice that negatively affect women in Sonoma County.

Following the guidelines of the Creating Ordinance, the Commission will continue to reflect and address the needs of the community. It is the intent of the Commission to retain flexibility in the conduct of its affairs.

## Article III Organization

### Section 1. Commission Membership

The Commission shall consist of fifteen (15) members, three (3) per district, as appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

- A. Terms.** All appointments by the Board shall be for two years. There is no limit to the number of terms for which a Commissioner may be reappointed.
- B. Composition.** The Commission shall reflect and represent the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Sonoma County.
- C. Compensation.** Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but may, with prior approval, be reimbursed for authorized, reasonable, and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.
- D. Resignation.** The resignation of a Commissioner shall be in writing to the appointing Supervisor, the Chair of the Commission and staff.
- E. Removal from Commission.** Commissioners serve at the pleasure of the appointing Supervisor. The failure of a Commissioner to fulfill the duties designated herein will be brought to the attention of the appointing Supervisor by an Officer and/or staff. Prior to

this action, a Commissioner will be given notice of the intent and an opportunity to respond to the request for removal.

## Section 2. Commissioner Role and Duties

Commissioners are expected to fulfill the role and carry out the duties as described below.

- A. Attendance at Regular (Monthly) Commission Meetings.** Attendance at Regular Commission meetings is essential, since a Quorum (as defined in Article IV, Section 4) is required to conduct Commission business. Therefore, Commissioners are expected to attend at least two-thirds (2/3) of the Regular Commission meetings held during any twelve (12) month period<sup>1</sup>.

However, if it is necessary to miss a Regular Commission meeting, Commissioners are expected to give an Officer prior notice.

Staff will provide a report on attendance at Regular Commission meetings.

### B. Conduct.

- 1) **Standards and Guidelines.** At Commission meetings, events and activities, as well as when representing the Commission in any official capacity, Commissioners shall adhere to generally acceptable standards of business conduct and to any specific guidelines/protocols adopted by the Commission. They shall not engage in:
  - a) habitual conduct which disrupts the Commission and/or interferes with the conduct of Commission business, or
  - b) conduct which would have a negative impact on the integrity of and/or the community's confidence in the Commission.
- 2) **Ethics.** Commissioners are expected to adhere to high ethical standards in the conduct of their duties. Such conduct requires that Commissioners:
  - a) comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of the Commission;
  - b) be independent, impartial and fair in their judgment and actions; and
  - c) conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless legally confidential, and in an atmosphere of respect and civility
- 3) **Conflicts of Interest.** In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the public good, Commissioners are prohibited from using their official positions to influence decisions in which they have a financial interest, or an organizational responsibility, or where they have a personal relationship that would constitute a conflict of interest.

Commissioners should avoid taking any action that could be construed as, or create the appearance of, using public office for personal gain, including use of the title of Commissioner and/or Commission stationery or other County resources to obtain or promote personal interests and/or business.

- 4) **Representation of the Commission.** Commissioners are encouraged to represent themselves as individual Commissioners in community advocacy and

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<sup>1</sup> The two-thirds requirement is deemed to be met by attending eight (8) of twelve (12) or seven (7) of eleven (11) Regular Commission meetings held in a twelve (12) month period.

activities related to the mission and Work Plan of the Commission. However, they are not authorized to represent, speak or act on behalf of the Commission as a whole unless so authorized by the Commission.

- C. Communication with Appointing Supervisor.** Each Commissioner acts as a liaison between the Commission and his/her appointing Supervisor, and thus is expected to communicate regularly with his/her appointing Supervisor about the Commission's activities.
- D. Contribution to the Work of the Commission.** In addition to the other responsibilities stated in this Section, each Commissioner is expected to support the Commission's goals and activities by serving as an Officer, an appointed Coordinator, Liaison and/or as Chair of a committee, or by serving as an active member of an Ad Hoc or a Standing Committee.
- E. Leaves of Absence.** If a Commissioner is unable to fulfill the designated duties due to unusual circumstances, s/he can request a leave of absence from the Commission. Leaves of absence are granted at the recommendation of staff the Chair and with approval of the appointing Supervisor and shall not exceed six (6) months.

### **Section 3. Governance**

- A. Officers.** The Officers of the Commission shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair and an Officer-at-Large. The duties of these Officers shall be those which generally apply to such officers, stated herein, and/or designated by the Commission.
- B. Term.** The term of Officers and appointments shall be for one (1) fiscal year from July 1st through June 30th.
- C. Qualifications for Officers.**
  - 1) Chair.** To serve as the Chair, a Commissioner shall:
    - a) have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination.
    - b) be an able and willing communicator.
    - c) have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Coordinator, Liaison, or Chair/member of a committee.
    - d) express the intention to attend and lead at least ten (10) of the Regular Commission meetings during the one-year term.
    - e) have willingly accepted the designated duties assigned to the Chair.
  - 2) Vice-Chair.** To serve as the Vice-Chair, a Commissioner shall:
    - a) have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination.
    - b) be an able and willing communicator.
    - c) have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Coordinator, Liaison, or Chair/member of a committee.
    - d) have expressed a willingness to support the Chair and to fulfill the other duties assigned.

- 3) Officer-at-Large: To serve as the Officer-at-Large, a Commissioner shall:
- a) have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination.
  - b) be an able and willing communicator.
  - c) have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Liaison, Coordinator, or Chair/member of a committee.
  - d) have expressed a willingness to support the Chair, and Vice-Chair and to fulfill the other duties assigned.

**D. Powers and Duties of Officers.**

- 1) **Chair.** The duties of the Chair are listed below.

- a) **Duties for Commission Meetings.** At Commission meetings, the Chair shall:
  1. preside over Commission meetings, maintain orderly procedure in accordance with these Bylaws, and decide questions of procedure subject to the full Commission.
  2. develop the agenda for Commission meetings with the assistance of other Commissioners, Officers and staff.
  3. be entitled to vote only when it is necessary to break a tie vote.
  4. be allowed to participate in discussion relating to any matter s/he deems appropriate.
  5. recognize any member of the Commission who desires to speak.
  6. set and adhere to time-limits for any member of the public who desires to address the Commission.
  7. rule on all procedural matters or questions not specifically addressed in these Bylaws, subject to the approval of the full Commission.
  8. produce minutes of the meetings with the assistance of other Commissioners, Officers and staff.
- b) **Duties Related to Commission Operations.** The Chair shall:
  1. serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.
  2. participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission's work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met and periodically make a progress report to the Commission.
  3. serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties.
  4. represent and speak on behalf of the Commission at public meetings (e.g., Board of Supervisors meeting) on matters pertaining or relating to the Commission.

**2) The Vice-Chair.** The Vice-Chair shall:

- a) preside over Commission meetings in the Chair's absence.
- b) assist the Chair in developing the agenda for Commission meetings.
- c) participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met.
- d) serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties.
- e) fill a vacancy occurring in the office of Chair for the unexpired term.

**3) Officer-at-Large:** The Officer-at-Large shall:

- a) preside over Commission meetings in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair.
- b) assist the Chair in developing the agenda for Commission meetings.
- c) participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met.
- d) serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties.
- e) fill a vacancy occurring in the office of Vice-Chair for the unexpired term.

**E. Nominations and Elections.** At a Regular Commission meeting prior to the end of the term for current Officers, the Chair will read the duties and qualifications of Chair from the By-Laws, and nominations will be taken from the floor. Any qualified Commissioner is eligible to be nominated (or to nominate him/herself). The same process shall then be followed for taking Vice-Chair nominations and subsequently for taking Officer-at-Large nominations.

Elections can be held following the close of nominations, and Officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote. If a Commissioner is unable to attend the Commission meeting, s/he can be nominated and elected, based on prior verbal/written statement that if elected s/he will accept the position and fulfill the duties of the office.

**F. Vacancies of Elected Office.**

- 1) Chair.** Should the office of Chair become vacant during term, the Vice-Chair shall assume the office of Chair for the remainder of the term.
- 2) Vice-Chair.** Should the office of Vice-Chair become vacant during a term, the Officer-at-Large shall assume the office of Vice-Chair remainder of the term.
- 3) Officer-at-Large.** Should the office of Officer-at-Large become vacant during a term, the Chair shall take nominations for the office from the floor at the next Regular Commission meeting. Once nominations are closed, the election for Officer-at-Large to serve the remainder of the term can be held.

- G. Removal From Office:** An Officer may be removed from office prior to the expiration of his/her term by vote of the Commission.

## **Section 4. Staff**

The Commission shall receive support from management and clerical staff as assigned by the Director of the Human Resources Department.

## **Section 5. Program Budget**

Each fiscal year, the Officers and staff shall develop a budget for the Commission's program funds that are tied to the Commission's Work Plan. Staff is responsible for management of the budget and expenditures and for providing periodic budget reports to the Commission.

# **Article IV Meetings**

## **Section 1. Regular Commission Meetings**

- A. Schedule.** Regular Commission meetings shall be scheduled for the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM, except as noted in Article IV, Section 1 (E). The time and date will only be changed by the Commission for the purpose of facilitating the conduct of Commission business, and if changed, the date and time will be announced to the Commission and the public with at least thirty (30) days notice.

Should the meeting fall on a holiday; the meeting will be held on the Thursday of the preceding week. This meeting shall be announced with at least thirty (30) days prior notice.

- B. Location.** Staff will be responsible for securing a facility deemed appropriate for the Regular Commission meetings. Once selected, the location will be announced to the Commission and the public.
- C. Ralph M. Brown Act:** All Regular Commission meetings shall be called, noticed, held and conducted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, hereafter referred to as the "Brown Act."

Pursuant with Section 54954.3 of the Brown Act, the agendas for Regular Commission meetings shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission.

- D. Agenda.**
- 1) Submission of Items.** Staff or any Commissioner may place an item on the agenda. Agenda items should be submitted to the Commission Office at least two weeks prior to the Commission meeting.
  - 2) Preparation and Content.** The Chair will work with Officers, other Commissioners and staff to prepare the agenda for Commission meetings. The agenda will contain a brief general description of each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.
  - 3) Distribution and Posting.** At least seventy-two (72) hours before the Regular Commission meeting, the agenda will be distributed to the Commissioners and posted at a location that is freely accessible to the public.

4) **Additions after Posting.** No action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as permitted by Govt. Code 54954.2 of the Brown Act.

E. **Cancellation of a Regular Meeting:** A Regular Commission meeting can be cancelled by the vote of the Commission or the agreement of two (2) Officers.

## **Section 2. Special Commission Meetings**

A. **Call for Special Meeting.** Special meetings may be called by an Officer or the written agreement of the majority of active Commissioners (i.e., Commissioners not on a Leave of Absence, as defined in Article III, Section 2(E)).

B. **Purpose.** The purpose of the special meeting shall be stated in the call.

C. **Notice.** Except in cases of emergency, at least twenty-four (24) hour notice, and such other notice as directed by the Brown Act, shall be given prior to any special meeting.

D. **Agenda.** The agenda for a special meeting shall be limited to the specific issue(s) for which the meeting was called and will contain a brief general description of the business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.

E. **Conduct of Meeting.** The meeting shall be held and conducted in accordance with the Brown Act.

## **Section 3. Rules of Order**

Meetings of the Commission shall be conducted in accordance with fair and orderly procedures such as those described in Robert's Rules of Order and/or Roberta's Rules of Order, latest edition, except as required by state law or as provided by these Bylaws.

## **Section 4. Quorum**

A majority of the duly appointed Commissioners shall constitute a Quorum. Commission action may be taken only by a majority vote of the Quorum.

# **Article V**

## **Structure for Supporting Commission's Work Plan and Activities**

### **Section 1. Work Plan**

The Commission will review its achievements, goals and activities annually, and the outcome will form the basis for the Commission's Work plan. Staff will work with the Officers to produce a formal Work Plan that will be reviewed and approved both by the Commission as a whole and the Board of Supervisors at least biennially.

### **Section 2. Commission Structure and Appointments**

Through the annual planning process, a Commission structure will be developed for accomplishing the Work Plan goals and presented to the Commission for approval. Once the structure is approved, the Chair shall present nominees for appointed positions (Coordinators, Liaisons, and committee Chairs) to the Commission for review and approval. Any vacancy of an appointed position shall be filled by the same approval process as soon as possible after the vacancy is announced.

### **Section 3. Coordinators**

Coordinators assume responsibility for the oversight and direction of a broad Work Plan topic area. This role involves coordinating all Commission activities that fall within the scope of the topic area.

Coordinators are responsible for determining how the work in their topic area is to be accomplished. They may solicit Commissioners (totaling less than a quorum), community members, and/or staff to assist them in their efforts.

Coordinators are responsible for reporting to the Commission on their activities and their progress toward meeting the goals/objectives established by the Work Plan.

### **Section 4. Liaisons**

Liaisons act as intermediaries with other organizations/agencies.

Liaisons are responsible for determining how to carry out their assignment. They may solicit other Commissioners (totaling less than a Quorum), community members, and/or staff to assist them as necessary.

Liaisons are responsible for reporting to the Commission on their activities and their progress toward meeting the goals/objectives established by the Work Plan.

### **Section 5. Ad Hoc Committees**

Ad Hoc Committees may be established to carry out a specific objective or activity within a stated time frame.

Ad Hoc Committees are disbanded once the specific objective has been accomplished.

### **Section 6. Standing Committees**

Standing Committees may be established to assume responsibility for the Commission's ongoing work in a general topic area. Standing Committees are created by the Commission and remain active over an extended period. Regular meetings will be held according to regular dates, times and locations. Standing Committee meetings are subject to the requirements of the Brown Act.

## **Article VI Resolutions**

Resolutions drafted by the Commission and staff shall be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors and transmitted to the public through the appropriate County Process.

## **Article VII Amendments**

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted to the Officers and then brought to the Commission for discussion and approval.

Approved by Commission: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/08/2009

Approved by Director of Human Resources: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Board of Supervisors: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bylaws: Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women  
Revisions proposed by Katie M. Gordon  
April 30, 2025

### **Article I Name**

The name of this Commission is the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, hereafter referred to as the “Commission.”

### **Article II Purpose**

The Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma declared, in 1975, its policy to take affirmative action to eliminate the practice of discrimination and prejudice on account of sex. Therefore, this policy, pursuant to and in accordance with the law, the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women was established.

The purpose of the Commission is to promote equal rights and opportunities that enhance the quality of life for all women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals, and to address issues of discrimination and prejudice that negatively affect individuals based on gender, including but not limited to, women, girls, transgender, and nonbinary people in Sonoma County.

Following the guidelines of the Creating Ordinance, the Commission will continue to reflect and address the needs of the community. It is the intent of the Commission to retain flexibility in the conduct of its affairs.

### **Article III Organization**

#### **SECTION 1. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP**

The Commission shall consist of fifteen (15) members, three (3) per district, as appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

##### **1. Terms**

All appointments by the Board shall be for two years. There is no limit to the number of terms for which a Commissioner may be reappointed.

##### **2. Composition**

The Commission shall reflect and represent the racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity of Sonoma County.

##### **3. Compensation**

Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but may, with prior approval, be reimbursed for authorized, reasonable, and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

##### **4. Resignation**

A Commissioner may resign by submitting a written notice of resignation to the appointing Supervisor, the Officers of the Commission, and Commission staff. Commissioners are encouraged to provide as much notice as possible prior to resignation, with a preferred minimum notice of thirty (30) days, to facilitate the coordination of Commission workflows.

##### **5. Removal from Commission**

Commissioners serve at the pleasure of the appointing Supervisor. The failure of a Commissioner to fulfill the duties designated herein will be brought to the attention of the appointing Supervisor by an Officer and/or staff. Prior to this action, a Commissioner will be given notice of the intent and an opportunity to respond to the request for removal.

## **SECTION 2. COMMISSIONER ROLE AND DUTIES**

Commissioners are expected to fulfill the role and carry out the duties as described below.

### **1. Attendance at Regular (Monthly) Commission Meetings**

Attendance at Regular (Monthly) Commission Meetings Attendance at Regular Commission meetings is essential, since a Quorum (as defined in Article IV, Section 4) is required to conduct Commission business. Commissioners are expected to attend at least seven (7) of the eleven (11) Regular Commission meetings held in a twelve (12) month calendar period. Teleconferencing and video conferencing options are available as defined in the traditional Brown Act teleconference requirements and AB 2449.

Commissioners absent from a Regular Commission meeting on official Commission business (official Commission business must be approved by Officers) will not be counted as having missed a meeting. Instead, any absence due to representation of the Commission at another event that is approved by all Officers is of the same value as being present at a Regular Commission meeting.

However, if it is necessary to miss a Regular Commission meeting, Commissioners are expected to give an Officer staff prior notice.

Officers will provide a report on attendance at Regular Commission meetings.

The two-thirds requirement is deemed to be met by attending seven (7) of eleven (11) Regular Commission meetings held in a twelve (12) month period.

## **2. Conduct**

### **1. Standards and Guidelines**

At Commission meetings, events, and activities, as well as when representing the Commission in any official capacity, Commissioners shall adhere to generally acceptable standards of business conduct and to any specific guidelines/protocols adopted by the Commission. They shall not engage in:

1. habitual conduct which disrupts the Commission and/or interferes with the conduct of Commission business, or
2. conduct which would have a negative impact on the integrity of and/or the community's confidence in the Commission.

### **2. Ethics**

Commissioners are expected to adhere to high ethical standards in the conduct of their duties. Such conduct requires that Commissioners:

1. comply with both the letter and the spirit of the laws and policies affecting operations of the Commission;
2. be independent, impartial, and fair in their judgment and actions; and

3. conduct public deliberations and processes openly, unless legally confidential, and in an atmosphere of respect and civility.

### **3. Conflicts of Interest**

In order to assure their independence and impartiality on behalf of the public good, Commissioners are prohibited from using their official positions to influence decisions in which they have a financial interest, or an organizational responsibility, or where they have a personal relationship that would constitute a conflict of interest.

Commissioners should avoid taking any action that could be construed as, or create the appearance of, using public office for personal gain, including use of the title of Commissioner and/or Commission stationery or other County resources to obtain or promote personal interests and/or business through any means, including personal social media accounts.

If a Commissioner holds a position on the Board or Committee of an external organization or third-party entity, and a matter is brought before the Commission that could financially benefit that organization or entity, the Commissioner shall abstain from participating in any discussion or vote related to that matter. This includes, but is not limited to, any financial request or proposal affecting the Commissioner's affiliated organization or entity. The purpose of this provision is to avoid any potential conflict of interest and maintain the integrity of the Commission's decision-making process.

In addition, the California Fair Political Practices Commission requires all Commissioners to complete Form 700 – Statement of Economic Interests every two years. This form discloses financial interests and must be completed by officials who make or participate in governmental decisions. It is a public document that identifies where conflicts of interest may arise and serves as a reminder of potential conflicts in daily work.

### **4. Representation of the Commission**

Commissioners are encouraged to represent themselves as individual Commissioners in community advocacy and activities related to the mission and work plan of the Commission. However, they are not authorized to represent, speak, or act on behalf of the Commission as a whole through any means, including through personal social media accounts, unless so authorized by the Commission.

### **5. Communication with Appointing Supervisor**

Each Commissioner acts as a liaison between the Commission and his/her appointing Supervisor and thus is expected to communicate regularly with his/her appointing Supervisor about the Commission's activities.

### **6. Contribution to the Work of the Commission**

In addition to the other responsibilities stated in this Section, each Commissioner is expected to support the Commission's goals and activities by serving as an Officer, an appointed Coordinator, Liaison, and/or as Chair of a committee, or by serving as an active member of an Ad Hoc or a Standing Committee.

### **7. Leaves of Absence**

If a Commissioner is unable to fulfill the designated duties due to unusual circumstances, s/he can request a leave of absence from the Commission. Leaves of

absence are granted at the recommendation of the Chair and with approval of the appointing Supervisor and shall not exceed six (6) months.

## **SECTION 3. GOVERNANCE**

### **1. Officers**

The Officers of the Commission shall be a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and an Officer-at-Large. The duties of these Officers shall be those which generally apply to such officers, stated herein, and/or designated by the Commission.

### **2. Term**

The term of Officers and appointments shall be for one (1) fiscal year from July 1st through June 30th.

### **3. Spending Authority**

The Officers shall perform the duties and responsibilities prescribed in the Bylaws and are authorized to approve the use of funds for Commission-related business in an amount not to exceed a cumulative total of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) between meetings of the Commission. Ratification of these expenditures by the entire Commission must occur at the next Commission meeting and must be recorded in the Commission minutes.

### **4. Qualifications for Officers**

#### **1. Chair**

To serve as the Chair, a Commissioner shall:

1. have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination (see Article III, Section 2.1);
2. be an able and willing communicator;
3. have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Coordinator, Liaison, or Chair/member of a committee;
4. express the intention to attend and lead at least nine (9) of the Regular Commission meetings during the one-year term; and
5. have willingly accepted the designated duties assigned to the Chair.

#### **2. Vice-Chair**

To serve as the Vice-Chair, a Commissioner shall:

1. have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination (see Article III, Section 2.1);
2. be an able and willing communicator;
3. have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Coordinator, Liaison, or Chair/member of a committee;
4. have expressed a willingness to support the Chair and to fulfill the other duties assigned.

#### **3. Officer-at-Large**

To serve as the Officer-at-Large, a Commissioner shall:

1. have attended at least four (4) Commission meetings within six (6) months prior to nomination (see Article III, Section 2.1);
2. be an able and willing communicator;

3. have contributed to the Commission's work by serving as a Liaison, Coordinator, or Chair/member of a committee;
4. have expressed a willingness to support the Chair, and Vice-Chair and to fulfill the other duties assigned.

## **5. Powers and Duties of Officers**

### **1. Chair**

The duties of the Chair are listed below.

#### **1. Duties for Commission Meetings.** At Commission meetings, the Chair shall:

1. preside over Commission meetings, maintain orderly procedure in accordance with these Bylaws, and decide questions of procedure subject to the full Commission;
2. develop the agenda for Commission meetings with the assistance of other Commissioners, Officers, staff;
3. be entitled to vote only when it is necessary to break a tie vote;
4. be allowed to participate in discussion relating to any matter s/he deems appropriate;
5. recognize any member of the Commission who desires to speak;
6. set and adhere to time-limits for any member of the public who desires to address the Commission;
7. rule on all procedural matters or questions not specifically addressed in these Bylaws, subject to the approval of the full Commission; and
8. produce minutes of the meetings with the assistance of other Commissioners and Officers and staff.

#### **2. Duties Related to Commission Operations.** The Chair shall:

1. serve as an ex-officio member of all committees;
2. participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission's work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met and periodically make a progress report to the Commission;
3. serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties; and
4. represent and speak on behalf of the Commission at public meetings (e.g. Board of Supervisors meeting) on matters pertaining to or relating to the Commission.

### **2. The Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall:

1. preside over Commission meetings in the Chair's absence;
2. assist the Chair in developing the agenda for Commission meetings;
3. participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met;
4. serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and

- staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties; and
5. fill a vacancy occurring in the office of Chair for the unexpired term.

### **3. Officer-at-Large**

The Officer-at-Large shall:

1. preside over Commission meetings in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair;
2. assist the Chair in developing the agenda for Commission meetings;
3. participate, together with the other Officers and staff, in monitoring the progress of the Commission work activities to ensure that the annual Work Plan goals are met;
4. serve as a resource to Commissioners in their efforts to contribute to the Commission's work and, when required, collaborate with other Officers and staff to resolve issues related to a Commissioner's fulfillment of designated duties; and
5. fill a vacancy occurring in the office of Vice-Chair for the unexpired term.

### **6. Nominations and Elections**

At the Regular Commission meeting preceding the expiration of the current Officers' terms, the Chair shall read the duties and qualifications of the Chair as set forth in these Bylaws. Nominations for the office of Chair shall then be solicited from the floor, and any qualified Commissioner may be nominated or may self-nominate. A similar process shall be followed for the nomination of the Vice-Chair, followed by the nomination of the Officer-at-Large.

Elections can be held following the close of nominations, and Officers shall be elected by a simple majority vote. If a Commissioner is unable to attend the Commission meeting, s/he can be nominated and elected, based on prior verbal/written statement that if elected s/he will accept the position and fulfill the duties of the office.

### **7. Vacancies of Elected Office**

#### **1. Chair**

Should the office of Chair become vacant during term, the Vice-Chair shall assume the office of Chair for the remainder of the term.

#### **2. Vice-Chair**

Should the office of Vice-Chair become vacant during a term, the Officer-at-Large shall assume the office of Vice-Chair remainder of the term.

#### **3. Officer-at-Large**

Should the office of Officer-at-Large become vacant during a term, the Chair shall take nominations for the office from the floor at the next Regular Commission meeting. Once nominations are closed, the election for Officer-at-Large to serve the remainder of the term can be held.

### **8. Removal From Office**

An Officer may be removed from office prior to the expiration of his/her term by vote of the Commission.

## **SECTION 4. STAFF**

The Commission shall receive support from management and clerical staff as assigned by the County of Sonoma.

## **SECTION 5. PROGRAM BUDGET**

Each fiscal year, the Officers and staff shall develop a budget for the Commission's program funds that are tied to the Commission's Work Plan. Officers and staff are responsible for management of the budget and expenditures and for providing periodic budget reports to the Commission.

## **Article IV Meetings**

### **SECTION 1. REGULAR COMMISSION MEETINGS**

#### **1. Schedule**

Regular Commission meetings shall be held on the second (2nd) Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM, except as otherwise provided herein. The time and date of such meetings may only be changed by the Commission for the purpose of facilitating Commission business. In the event of a change, notice of the new date and time shall be provided to the Commission and the public no less than thirty (30) days in advance. Should such notice not be provided, a Commissioner shall be excused from any absence resulting from an inability to attend the rescheduled meeting.

If a Regular meeting falls on a holiday, it shall be rescheduled to the Thursday of the preceding week. Notice of such rescheduled meeting shall be provided no less than thirty (30) days in advance. Should such notice not be provided, a Commissioner shall be excused from any absence resulting from an inability to attend the rescheduled meeting.

No Regular Commission meetings shall be held during the month of December.

#### **2. Location**

Staff will be responsible for securing a facility deemed appropriate for the Regular Commission meetings. Once selected, the location will be announced to the Commission and the public.

#### **3. Ralph M. Brown Act**

All Regular Commission meetings shall be called, noticed, held and conducted in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, hereafter referred to as the "Brown Act."

Pursuant with Section 54954.3 of the Brown Act, the agendas for Regular Commission meetings shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the Commission on items of interest to the public that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Commission.

#### **4. Agenda**

##### **1. Submission of Items**

Commissioners may place an item on the agenda. Agenda items should be submitted to Officers at least two weeks prior to the Commission meeting unless a shorter deadline is announced by the Chair or staff.

##### **2. Preparation and Content**

The Chair will work with Officers, other Commissioners and/or staff to prepare the agenda for Commission meetings. The agenda will contain a brief general description of

each item of business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.

### **3. Distribution and Posting**

At least seventy-two (72) hours before the Regular Commission meeting, the agenda will be distributed to the Commissioners and posted at a location that is freely accessible to the public.

### **4. Additions after Posting**

No action shall be taken on any item not appearing on the posted agenda, except as permitted by Government Code 54954.2 of the Brown Act.

### **5. Cancellation of a Regular Meeting**

A Regular Commission meeting can be cancelled by the vote of the Commission or the agreement of two (2) Officers.

## **SECTION 2. SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETINGS**

### **1. Call for Special Meeting**

Special meetings may be called by an Officer or the written agreement of the majority of active Commissioners (i.e. Commissioners not on a Leave of Absence, as defined in Article III, Section 2.7).

### **2. Purpose**

The purpose of the special meeting shall be stated in the call.

### **3. Notice**

Except in cases of emergency, at least twenty-four (24) hour notice, and such other notice as directed by the Brown Act, shall be given prior to any special meeting.

### **4. Agenda**

The agenda for a special meeting shall be limited to the specific issue(s) for which the meeting was called and will contain a brief general description of the business to be transacted or discussed at the meeting.

### **5. Conduct of Meeting**

The meeting shall be held and conducted in accordance with the Brown Act.

### **6. Attendance**

Commissioners shall notify the Officers at the earliest opportunity regarding their ability to attend a special meeting, to facilitate the calculation of quorum. A Commissioner shall not incur an unexcused absence for failing to attend a special meeting.

## **SECTION 3. RULES OF ORDER**

Meetings of the Commission shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in Robert's Rules of Order and/or Roberta's Rules of Order, except as required by state law or as provided by these Bylaws.

## **SECTION 4. QUORUM**

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the duly appointed Commissioners who are not on a Leave of Absence or attending an event in service of the Commission. Commission action may be taken only by a majority vote of those present within the quorum.

## **Article V Structure for Supporting Commission's Work Plan and Activities**

### **SECTION 1. WORK PLAN**

The Commission shall review its achievements, goals, and activities on an annual basis, and the outcome of this review shall form the basis for the Commission's Work Plan.

### **SECTION 2. COORDINATORS**

Coordinators assume responsibility for the oversight and direction of a broad Work Plan topic area. This role involves coordinating all Commission activities that fall within the scope of the topic area.

Coordinators are responsible for determining how the work in their topic area is to be accomplished. They may solicit Commissioners (totaling less than a quorum, as defined in Article IV, Section 4) and/or community members, and/or staff to assist them in their efforts.

Coordinators are responsible for reporting to the Commission on their activities and their progress toward meeting the goals/objectives established by the Work Plan.

### **SECTION 3. LIAISONS**

Liaisons act as intermediaries with other organizations/agencies.

Liaisons are responsible for determining how to carry out their assignment. They may solicit other Commissioners (totaling less than a quorum) and/or community members, and/or staff to assist them as necessary.

Liaisons are responsible for reporting to the Commission on their activities and their progress toward meeting the goals/objectives established by the Work Plan.

### **SECTION 4. AD HOC COMMITTEES**

Ad Hoc Committees may be established to address a single issue or specific project with a limited scope and within a defined time frame. Such committees shall be comprised of fewer than a quorum of the full Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and shall meet for a limited duration, not exceeding one (1) year. Upon the completion of their assigned task, Ad Hoc Committees shall be dissolved. These committees may hold meetings without the public notice requirements mandated by the Brown Act.

### **SECTION 5. STANDING COMMITTEES**

Standing Committees may be established to assume responsibility for the Commission's ongoing work in a general topic area. These committees are created by the Commission and remain active for an indefinite term to address a specific issue or set of issues. Standing Committees are not subject to quorum requirements and may have more or fewer members than a quorum of the full Commission. Regular meetings shall be held at designated times, dates, and locations. Meetings of Standing Committees shall comply with the open and public meeting notice requirements of the Brown Act, as outlined in Article IV, Section 1.4.3.

**Article VI Resolutions**

Resolutions drafted by the Commission and staff shall be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors and transmitted to the public through the appropriate County Process.

**Article VII Amendments**

Proposed amendments to these Bylaws shall be submitted to the Officers and then brought to the Commission for discussion and approval.

**Approvals**

Approved by Commission:

Approved by Director of Human Resources:

Approved by Board of Supervisors:

## **Article II: Purpose**

- The purpose of the Commission is now stated as promoting equal rights and opportunities for “all women, girls, and gender-expansive individuals.”
- The revised language also explicitly includes “transgender, and nonbinary people” under the groups addressed by the Commission.
  - This change reflects a more inclusive framework and addresses the Commission's commitment to gender inclusivity by acknowledging nonbinary, transgender, and gender-expansive individuals.

## **Article III Section 1.4: Commission Resignation**

- This language was updated to clarify the process of resigning from the Commission.
- In addition, a 30-day notice was added to the language. This notice period ensures that the resigning Commissioner’s responsibilities can be fairly redistributed among other Commissioners, and prevents undue burden being placed on remaining members.

## **Article III Section 2.1: Commissioner Role and Duties, Attendance**

- The attendance requirement has been modified to reflect that the Commission does not meet during the month of December.
  - I.e., Attendance requirements changed from attending at least eight (8) of twelve (12) meetings to attending at least seven (7) of eleven (11) meetings in a twelve-month period.
- Regular Meeting absences due to official Commission business may now be counted as attendance to the Regular Meeting.
- Commissioners are now required to give prior notice to an Officer or staff if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- Teleconferencing and video conferencing options have been outlined.

## **Article III Section 2.2.3: Commissioner Conduct / Conflicts of Interest**

- Two paragraphs have been added to this section.
  - The first new paragraph (paragraph #3) clarifies that a Commissioner must recuse themselves from any vote that results in financial benefit to any Board, Committee, or third-party entity that they are involved with.
  - The second new paragraph (paragraph #4) outlines the requirement to complete Form 700 every two years.

## **Article III Section 3: Governance**

- Section 3.3: Spending Authority
  - New spending authority for Officers has been added, which allows them to approve expenditures up to \$300 for Commission-related business between meetings, with ratification required by the Commission.
- Section 3.4.1: Chair
  - Qualifications for serving as the Chair has been updated to include an expectation of attending at least nine (9) Regular Commission meetings during the term for the Chair.

- Section 3.5:
  - All language for Chair, Vice-Chair, and OAL has been updated to reflect “annual Work Plan goals” rather than “bi-annual”, which had been proposed in previous revisions.

#### **Article III Section 4: Staff**

- Staff support is now assigned to the Commission by the “County of Sonoma,” rather than the “Director of the Human Resources Department.”

#### **Article IV Section 1: Regular Commission Meetings, Schedule**

- The language has been updated to specify that a Commissioner shall be excused from any absence due to a rescheduled meeting if thirty (30) days’ notice is not provided.
- Language was also changed to communicate that no meetings are held in December.

#### **Article IV Section 2.6: Special Commission Meetings, Attendance**

- The section now notes that Commissioners should notify Officers ASAP whether they will be able to attend a special meeting and that absence from a special meeting will not count against a Commissioner’s attendance record.

#### **Article V Section 1: Work Plan**

- This language was updated to provide a more flexible approach to our work.

#### **Article V Section 5: Ad Hoc Committees**

- The language for this section has been edited so that it more clearly aligns with Brown Act requirements for Ad Hoc Committees.
  - E.g., “limited scope,” “single issue”
  - The duration of Ad Hoc Committees is specified to be up to one (1) year, after which they will be dissolved.

#### **Article V Section 6: Standing Committees**

- The language for this section has been edited so that it more clearly aligns with Brown Act requirements for Standing Committees
  - E.g., “indefinite term” and quorum requirements
  - It is specified that Standing Committees are not subject to quorum requirements and may have more or fewer members than a quorum of the full Commission.
  - Standing Committee meetings must comply with the public notice requirements of the Brown Act, as outlined in other areas of the Bylaws.