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AGENDA DATE: March 08, 2022

TO: Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Neal Lopez, County Administrative Officer
Clinton Schaad, Auditor/Controller
Randy Hooper, Assistant County Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: FY 21/22 Measure R Update

RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION:

Receive and review the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Measure R Budget update, as presented by the County Administrative Officer.

DISCUSSION/SUMMARY:

In November of 2020, Measure R was supported in Del Norte County in order to provide funding for vital local services including support for law enforcement, emergency response, public infrastructure and other related capital projects/uses, preparing for and responding to natural disasters and health emergencies, improving animal control services, maintaining dispatch services for fire, ambulance and law enforcement, maintaining jail and criminal justice services and addressing blight and public nuisance (code enforcement).

The tax approved in the unincorporated area of the County was projected to generate \$1.2 million annually. As of the preparation of this report, the County has received funding through the month of November and is on pace to exceed original projections by several hundred thousand dollars. The Auditor-Controller is projecting year end Measure R revenue to be \$1.6 million, which significantly increases the County's ability to dedicate funding to expand and improve upon the services that were specifically identified by our community. Below are the approved uses of Measure R by the Board of Supervisors through the adopted FY 21/22 Budget as well as an update on each.

Support Law Enforcement and Maintain/Improve Dispatch Services

The FY 21/22 Adopted Budget for Measure R dedicated \$748,700 to support law enforcement and maintain dispatch services. These funds represent much needed wage

adjustments for all patrol and field related law enforcement positions (Sheriff's Office patrol positions, adult and juvenile Probation Officers, and District Attorney Investigators) and adult and juvenile correctional staff. For years, due to budget constraints, the County has been significantly out of market compared to other local law enforcement agencies (e.g. Crescent City Police Department, Curry County Sheriff's Office and Brookings Police Department) and other comparable local governments, which has resulted in Del Norte County being a training ground for officers that would then move on to higher paying jobs. At the request of the community to fill the allocated law enforcement positions in this County and at the request of the dedicated and hard-working employees who risk their health and safety on a daily basis, the Board approved these wage adjustments to make these critical positions more competitive in the local market and in an effort to be more successful in recruiting and retaining trained/experienced officers for this community.

To further support law enforcement, the adopted budget will also allow for a second administrative support position with the approval of a Records Clerk. For years, the Sheriff's Office has done their best to stay afloat with one administrative support position, often times falling behind on personnel related tasks, records management, risk management and other administrative functions. In June of 2021, the Sheriff's Office was able to hire a Records Clerk to improve upon administrative efficiencies and therefore the services provided to the community.

To maintain/improve dispatch services, the Board approved one new dispatch position. The Dispatch Division, prior to the approval of this position, was operating with five dispatchers for a 24 hours per day, 7 days per week and 365 days per year division within the Sheriff's Office. Although the Board recognizes the need for even more positions for this vital service to the community (dispatching all local law enforcement and emergency personnel), Measure R made it possible to take a step in the right direction to address this need.

Increase Code Enforcement/Public Nuisance/Blight Services

The Board also dedicated \$76,500 of Measure R funding in FY 21/22 to improve local code enforcement/public nuisance/blight services by adding an additional Code Enforcement Officer position. Thanks to Measure R funding, for the first time since this position was created, as of December 24, 2021, the County has two Code Enforcement (CE) Officers. Code Enforcement is by far one of the most requested services in our community and was one of the highest priorities of those surveyed for the use of Measure R funding. Having a second officer will not only provide backup for the current Code Enforcement Officer for safety when addressing blight and public nuisance in some of the more remote locations in the County, but will also allow for additional services related to code enforcement this community so badly needs.

Increase Emergency and Disaster Response

Over the past decade, California has experienced more frequent and severe natural disasters and emergencies. Unfortunately, Del Norte County has not been immune to this trend. Add a worldwide pandemic to this and the need for additional emergency preparedness and response, provided by the County's Office of Emergency Services

(OES), has never been more important. Recognizing the need to protect life and property of this community and that the requirements of this department far exceeds the capability of one position, the Board has committed a portion of the Measure R tax revenue (\$76,500 in FY 21/22) to funding an OES Coordinator position to assist the OES Manager in meeting the need for emergency preparedness, response and recovery in our community. The addition of one position brings the OES Department to two full time operational positions. Due to budget constraints, similar to Code Enforcement, the County has never been able to fund more than one operational position in the OES Department until the passage of Measure R. Since September, due to recruiting difficulties, the OES Department has been without a single operational position. As of the preparation of this report, both OES positions are now filled and we are confident that all OES related functions, meetings, trainings and exercises will be back on track in the very near future.

Increase/improve Animal Services

With the adoption of the FY 21/22 Budget, the Board approved a Kennel Attendant position as requested by the Department Head to assist the Animal Control Officers (ACO's) with day to day cleaning of the kennels and to allow the ACO's to focus on field operations and requests for services from the community. However, prior to the recruitment for this position, the Department Head determined there was a greater need in the Animal Services Division and the demand for services exceeded the current capacity of the department. In response, a request was submitted to replace the Kennel Attendant position with a supervisory position for animal services. In addition, to address current staffing requests for increased education and training and to fairly pay the Animal Control Officers for the actual duties being performed, the request also included a slight adjustment to the wages for the ACO's. On January 25th at a regularly scheduled meeting, the Board approved these changes and committed approximately \$60,000 to the Animal Services Department for the remainder of FY 21/22. The County is currently recruiting for the Animal Services Supervisor position with the intent to have it filled this month.

Increase in Planning Services

With the adoption of the Measure R FY 21/22 Budget, the Board allocated \$77,000 to the Planning Department to add one Planner position. This community relies on County Planning Division staff for a number of services including the review and application of various land use functions such as the review and circulation of development projects to the Planning Commission including subdivisions, Coastal Development Permits, and environmental review for larger projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act, etc., active coordination with regulatory agencies for compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program, development in high fire hazard severity zones, housing development requirements, providing zoning and general plan information on property for land owners, as well as land use information provided for required for real estate transactions, etc. In years past, the Planning Division has consisted of as many as three Planners who were augmented by a Department Head who also had Planning experience and so, for all intents and purposes, the Division had four Planners available to assist the community. Over the past decade, due to budgetary constraints, the Division has only been able to be staffed with a single Planner, augmented by the Department Head which has greatly diminished the ability of the Planning Division to provide as high of a level of

service to the community as needed causing project delays and community frustrations. Having dedicated funding for a second position not only meets a long standing priority of the Board, but the community as well. In September of 2021, the Planning Department was able to hire a second planner.

Public Infrastructure/Capital Improvements

At the time of the Adopted FY 21/22 Budget in September, the \$474,921 approved by the Board for Public Infrastructure/Capital Improvements represented the balance of Measure R tax revenue consisting of the projected carry forward fund balance from FY 20/21 (April, May and June 2021 receipts) and the estimated revenue for FY 21/22 less the other approved Measure R uses discussed above.

As stated and illustrated above, Measure R tax revenue was specifically committed to fund services approved by the voters. In closing, I feel it is important to address some of the misinformation surrounding how Measure R is being allocated, used and accounted for. To be clear, all of the Measure R Funding that has been allocated has been for improving and expanding services. A specific function of the Measure R Oversight Committee is to ensure Measure R Funding is not used to supplant existing services or projects. Measure R Funding allocated towards wages has all been directly related to the intent and purpose of Measure R. Each wage adjustment and position created is in an effort to improve and expand services to the community. As promised, there have not been any Administrative salary or benefit increases funded by Measure R. In addition, Measure R revenue and expenditures are accounted for in a separate fund dedicated specifically for accounting for Measure R funds. Measure R has not been and will not be deposited into the County's General Fund even though it is a general tax and can be used for general purposes. The Board and Budget Team decided to account for these funds separately for transparency to the community and to simplify the role of the Oversight Committee in overseeing Measure R tax revenues and expenditures. Also, accounting for these funds separately, prevents excess funds from being absorbed or closed out to the County's General Fund and allows unspent funds in any given fiscal year to carry forward to the following fiscal year. This allows Measure R funds to build a significant fund balance/reserve for costly infrastructure and capital improvement projects. Lastly, as a general revenue, Measure R can also be used a match to leverage even more state and federal funding for this community that may become available for uses related to the purposes specified in Measure R.

ALTERNATIVES:

Update only, no alternatives required.

CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

This section meets 2 of the following outcome measures for children in Del Norte County:

- Children ready for and succeeding in school.
- Children and youth are healthy and preparing for adulthood.
- Families are economically self-sufficient.
- Families are safe, stable and nurturing.
- Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life.
- No impact to Children as a result of this action.

ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

AUDITOR:

COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Neal Lopez

ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:

COUNTY COUNSEL:

PERSONNEL:

OTHER DEPARTMENT: